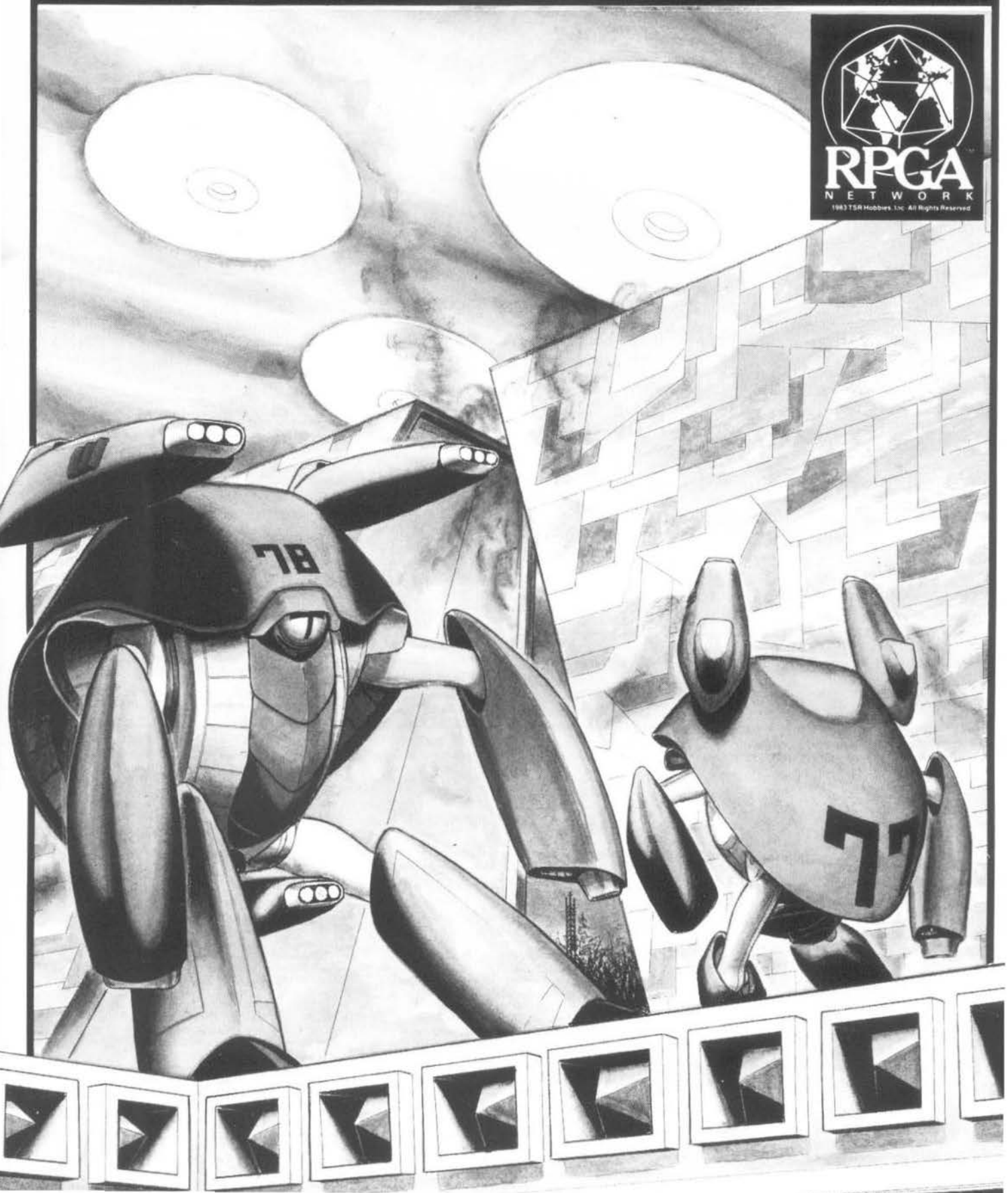
POLYHEDRON™

Newszine Issue 31



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POLYHEDRON™

NEWSZINE

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Notes From HQ

If this is your first issue of POLYHEDRON™ Newszine, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the RPGA™ Network. The newszine is your means of communication with over 10,000 other gamers worldwide. In it, we publish articles donated by members, club news, official rulings on game-related questions, and tournament modules. If you have an idea that you would like to share with the rest of the Network, write it up and send it to HQ. This is your chance to speak out!

The City Project

The contest to name the city is now officially closed. We have received approximately 150 entries, which are currently under consideration by our judging panel. Thanks to all those who contributed, and especially to Dave Axler for the extensive suggestions on background and physical layout for the city which accompanied his entry.

We are now finalizing details of the location, surrounding terrain, and general climate of the city. Those will be published in the next issue, along with the winning name. At that time, we will begin accepting submissions. Details will follow in issue #32.

White Rabbits

Good news! The long-awaited membership directory is finally out! The 1986 directory was mailed not only to the currently active members, but to all those who had been on our rosters since the last directory appeared in 1983. So everyone who missed out on the directory while it was discontinued should have one by now, regardless of whether or not those memberships have lapsed. The listing was compiled from data on our computer, some of which is outdated. If your gaming interests are not accurately listed, please call or write HQ with an update.

As of this printing, we still expect the Newszine to be back on schedule by issue #33, which should be released in December. All memberships which would have expired before the release of those issues have already been extended on our computer. They will not be terminated until mailings of those delayed items are complete. Membership renewal notices will continue to go out on schedule, as they are a function of a separate system which runs automatically. Memberships will NOT actually be terminated until they have been completely fulfilled.

TSR computer programmer Judy Gifford has finished designing the database for the tournament program, and we will be testing it out over the next few weeks before it is finalized. Once that is done, we will need volunteers to key in the data accumulated over the past few years. If you live within driving range of Lake Geneva and have some free time to donate, call HQ for details.

We are planning a few changes in the way player and judge experience points are calculated. Members Wes Meador and Jay Tummelson were good enough to point out a few inconsistencies in the prototype formulas that we had been using, and we have been considering other options. Jay's suggestions will be appearing in the next issue; meanwhile, if you have some ideas of your own, please send them to HQ. We will be making a final decision on that within the next month.

Convention News

GEN CON® 19 Game Fair is now behind us. Once again there were sleepless nights spent dealing with the myriad problems of bringing together 10,000 gamers and giving them all four days worth of fun. But this time, we were prepared. With the help of literally dozens of volunteer members, we made certain that no major mishaps occurred. All the Network tournaments went off as scheduled, and we always had enough judges to accommodate all the players who attended. We never lost anyone, and no equipment broke down. There were no major illnesses or injuries. Most importantly, everyone had a good time. It was a success. As always, we could not have accomplished what we did without the long hours and unselfish aid of members who volunteered their time and talent before and during the convention.

This year's tournaments were some of the best ever. On behalf of HQ and all the players, I would like to thank Frank Mentzer for "Gypsy," an unexpected adventure featuring a new concept in character relationships, Skip Williams for co-authoring a perfectly beastly Masters tournament with me, Dan Kramarsky for flying to Wisconsin early to finish "Honor Guard," Japji Singh Khalsa for donating a TOP SECRET® Game event just because I asked him to at Origins, Rick Reid for "Fluffy Goes to Heck," Steve Null for "Sundown at Lizard Rock," Bob Farnsworth for "Revenge," our very first AD&D® Game Oriental Tournament, David Cook for the basics of the STAR FRONTIERS® Game event, James M. Ward for "Rite of Passage," the module that became the GAMMA WORLD® Game tournament, Jeff Martin for "The Investigators," an original MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Game event which featured brand-new heroes, Keith Polster for "Star One," and Mike Przytarski and his crew for "Snowcrystal Odessey V: The Dove." Most of all, I'd like to thank Charlie Krank and Sandy Peterson of Chaosium, Inc. for the first-ever RPGA Network CALL OF CTHULHU™ Game tournament.

But HQ needs a lot more than great scenarios to make a raft of tournaments at the nation's largest gaming convention run smoothly. The following members made it all possible with the work they did before the con at HQ and on-site: Jeff Albanese, Doug Behringer, Don and Linda Bingle, John Cereso, Diane Cocroft, Dave Collins, Bryan and Sean Conry, Rose Estes, Ernie Gygax, Gary Gygax, Peter Hague, Les Hahn, Harold Johnson, Japji and Dharam Khalsa, Dan Kramarsky, Kerry Krause, Mike Lach, Jeff Martin, Bob and Adrian McFate, Steve Null, Rich Otto, Jon Pickens, Rocky Pisto, Marilyn and Daniel Pum, Rick Reid, Cory Reiman, Michelle Ryan, Rich Rydberg, Mike Selinker, Steve Thearle, Jay Tummelson, Verne Wetherholt, Skip Williams, and Lew Wright.

Special thanks go to John Vaccaro, who devised a system for keeping track of events, modules, judges, teams, and rooms on site, Sylvia Deering for keeping HQ together, and particularly Rembert Parker, for plowing through the mountains of paperwork at the convention and making sense of it all in record time.

On behalf of our on-site volunteers, I'd like to thank Marti Hayes, the Parkside Area Wargamers, and the MECCA security guards for giving RPGA Network Convention HQ a location that no one could find by blind chance, and for not revealing that location to anyone who didn't need to know.

Most of all, I'd like to thank the final round judges of "Gypsy." (They know what for, but I'll never tell.) They did a fabulous job.

These people made GEN CON 19 Game Fair the most enjoyable convention in history. And next year, when GEN CON Game Fair celebrates its twentieth birthday, we'll make it even better. Join us.

'Till next issue,
Penny Petticord

Letters

I recently received a membership renewal notice, and after a little consideration I decided not to renew my membership. When I originally joined the RPGA™ Network, it took at least five months to receive the first bit of mail from you. After a number of letters of complaint I finally began to receive my POLYHEDRON™ Newszine. You sent me a letter expressing your regret at the delays and even sent me a gift AD&D module. This satisfied me for a while, yet further delays, poor excuses, and the poor quality of the POLYHEDRON Newszine have brought back my disgust for the RPGA Network.

I see little benefit in joining for people, like me, who are unable to go to the big conventions such as GEN CON® Game Fair. Those who do go to such conventions are just about forced to join. I fail to realize why TSR, Inc. had to make the official AD&D® Game Open Tournament and the others of its kind into RPGA Network events, thereby restricting them to members only.

POLYHEDRON Newszine furiously footnotes even the remotest reference to any contents of TSR's game rulebooks. It deals only with TSR games and none of any other companies. And the RPGA Network staff members work on other projects for TSR while they should be fulfilling membership comittments. These practices make it obvious that TSR, Inc. considers the RPGA Network little more than a publicity ploy to which membership can be charged, thereby making it very cost efficient.

While I will no longer be a part of all this, I still expect to receive my remaining POLYHEDRON Newszine issues and the membership directory whenever they come out.

David A. Miller
North Miami Beach, FL

David, I chose to answer your letter in print because you seem to have some notions that are entirely untrue, and I want to make sure that others are not under the same false impressions.

First of all, it is true that we have suffered many delays in product shipments. Those delays irritate us at least as much as they do you — probably more so. No one's membership has been terminated, or will be, regardless of expiration date, until all the promised membership materials have been shipped. Membership directories went out to all those who had been on our membership roster within the past three years, not just to the ones who are currently active. We didn't want anyone who joined during the period in which the directory service was discontinued to miss out on it.

RPGA Network staff members do NOT work on projects for other departments. Tournaments, production of the directory, and major convention work are part of our membership committments too. Lack of staffing has forced priorities to be altered from time to time, but we do have additional permanent staff now, and we are catching up on all membership functions. However, our materials do go through the regular TSR production department for typesetting and layout, and their priorities are not under our control; TSR product comes first.

I would like to respond to your complaint about the "poor quality" of the Newszine, but I cannot act on your suggestions because you have given none. We are always open to suggestions about content and style, but we cannot act on criticism that is not constructive.

As for conventions, you don't have to go to GEN CON® Game Fair to participate in the tournament program anymore. In the past year, RPGA Network tournaments have been held at over 100 conventions across the nation, including three in your own home state. All have been listed in the Newszine. Furthermore, you need not feel "forced" to join the Network if you do go to a convention and want to play a tournament. We have only sponsored the AD&D® Game Open tournament at GEN CON Game Fair once in all of its history, and 90% of all tournaments that we do sponsor are open to the public. Members-only tournaments are traditionally made available at the larger conventions such as GEN CON Game Fair and Origins, but Network-sponsored open tournaments are offered there as well.

Our policy of footnoting material owned by TSR, Inc. and other game companies is a complication of allowing our submitters to retain copyright to their articles. Because almost any article about gaming includes some material from a published game system, and no one can claim copyright to material owned by someone else, credit listings are mandatory for the protection of the author's rights as well as those of the game company involved. This system is a bit clumsy and cumbersome, but we have always felt that allowing authors to retain rights to their material outweighed stylistic considerations. If our footnotes offend you, consider the alternatives.

Finally, I must take issue with your comment that we do not publish articles about non-TSR game systems. As I have said over and over, we are willing to print material about any role-playing game, but we at HQ cannot be expected to generate it all by ourselves. Even if we had the time, we do not know all the game systems on the market well enough to write about them. In fact, we publish only what our members submit. The fact that you have seen no material on your favorite system probably means that we have received none. When we do, we will publish it — watch the next issue for an article on STAR TREK: The Role-Playing Game. If you would seriously like to see some material on another system, why not submit some yourself and get the ball rolling? All you have to do is write it up and send it to HQ.

The RPGA Network is here to serve the hobby gamers, period. Your dues pay for the services which the Network offers, and TSR, Inc. makes no profit from them. Granted, the existence of the Network indirectly helps sales, but our tournaments help sales of all game companies, not just TSR, Inc. Some members take advantage of more services than others, but those membership dues are not making TSR wealthy.

You are perfectly right to expect the materials that were promised for the membership fee that you paid, and they are coming. But the RPGA Network is not a product; it is a club. And the only way to fully enjoy membership in a club is to participate. Satisfaction is partially YOUR responsibility; if you aren't participating, it's no wonder you aren't enjoying your membership.

Hopefully this has cleared up some misunderstandings. I wish you would reconsider renewing, but this is not an attempt to pressure you. Whatever your decision, thank you for writing — some people wouldn't bother to let us know why they were dissatisfied. Feel free to write again if you have concrete suggestions for improvement, whether or not you choose to continue your membership.

Up on a Soapbox

I feel that writing this letter is necessary in order to inform fellow members of a few problems within the RPGA Network. To start things off, it should be made clear that I am not angry or upset with the RPGA Network, or with anyone in specific. I am angry with the entire membership, though.

The RPGA Network was first started to give role-players an organization that they could call their own. This organization was started with close ties (for monetary reasons), with TSR, Inc. But it was designed to be separated from these close ties within five or six years, as membership and interest increased.

The opposite, though, has happened. TSR, Inc. has gained total control of the RPGA Network, forcing it and its members to be no more than TSR policy enforcers. The RPGA Network is dependent upon TSR for everything, and therefore forces its members, both players and judges, to abide by the rules and decisions which TSR re-

quests. This control extends from a strict adherence to game rules (no matter how much these rules go against nature and common sense), to how a tournament master must write and design his own event!

This can no longer be tolerated. The rules that bind an RPGA Network member must also bind TSR — from the submission of a module in enough time to be edited and sent to judges early, to the amount of control it can use. The problem of TSR control can be resolved using several methods.

The first problem is money. If the RPGA Network would stop giving away six free months of membership dues for every time a member judges a round, the cash flow would increase right away. A member who cares about quality gaming and the RPGA Network does not need to be "bribed" with free membership dues. The "experience points" and recognition that tournament participants receive should be more than enough. As more memberships are renewed with cash, more freedom can be gained from TSR, Inc.

The second problem is the "Official RPGA Network Events." These events are nothing more than modules written by TSR employees. Therefore, anyone wishing to hold a convention with an RPGA Network event must either write a module and have it edited and rewritten by TSR, or use a TSR module. This should not be! An official tournament should use modules written by members of the RPGA Network and approved by other members who do not receive salaries from TSR, Inc.

This can be easily done by starting a drive for members to submit ideas and modules to be edited and approved by a panel of RPGA Network judges. This panel would consist of six members with a seventh member from TSR for legal advice and such. These seven would be allowed to read the modules and suggest whatever changes should be made to make the game easier, or to change any severe deviation from the rules. They can also decide whether or not to even use the module(s), which is much fairer than the present method of one person with this control. This panel can meet once a month or even more, as needed, to resolve any problem.

The benefit of this is that a library of modules can be built up. This library can then be used for the smaller conventions that wish to have an RPGA Network event, but do not wish to write their own modules. This can prevent a "fast-write" module by a TSR staff member that is delivered on the day of the tournament and is hard to run. It can also remove the problem of two or more conventions using the same modules, and in the same state or even town.

All of these changes, though, are useless unless another major problem is corrected. This problem is with the members, not the RPGA Network itself. Many of the members feel that the RPGA Network is there to entertain them, and that they do not have to do anything for it. THIS IS NOT TRUE! The RPGA Network can only continue to exist and grow if the membership starts to get involved.

It is very easy for many of you to constantly complain about late scores, late issues of the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine, and low information content in the Newszine. But what have you done to help? Over 80% of the POLYHEDRON Newszine is written by the same people, issue after issue, with many of these people working for TSR! Of course the information and style is going to become stale after a while. It is not difficult for those of you with great ideas to submit them to the POLYHEDRON Newszine in usable format. In fact, it is easier to submit them to the POLYHEDRON Newszine than to "other" magazines, and those who read it will respond to it better since they are all involved in this area. Then the RPGA Network coordinator will have more time to compile scores and update memberships. Plus the influx of new ideas can only help the game. After all, once you use something in your game, why not tell others about it? It can't hurt.

The above information only touches on a few of the current problems in the RPGA Network. But they are the most pressing and severe ones. The solutions are by no means complete, but they are a start. And we must start soon, because the longer we become used to what is going on, the harder it will become to change. Every member out there has a part in this, if for no other reason than pride. After all, this could once again become the Greatest Official Organization of Gamers, instead of just the Largest Official Organization of Gamers. See the difference?

Michael R. Przytarski
Bolingbrook, IL

Mike, you're right on target. I couldn't agree more with your last comments. Up until recently, a few dedicated people have been doing the bulk of the work needed to support the Newszine and the tournament program. If everyone would contribute just a fraction of the time you yourself have put in writing for the Newszine or doing volunteer work in the tournament program, we could be well ahead of schedule! You have pointed out several problems that must be addressed before the Network can grow into a more cohesive gamers' organization, though a few of your details are inaccurate. I will try to clarify those few misconceptions below, but the point is that member participation is vital to our organization, and on that you are absolutely correct.

The truth is that demand for tournaments has increased to the point where HQ can no longer bear the entire burden of devising and developing material. It is time for the entire membership to contribute to the support of the program. HQ has already started a drive for members to write tournament scenarios. As for a tournament review board, we're way ahead of you. You may not realize it, but an informal board consisting of myself, Jon Pickens, and six volunteer member judges of 4th-level and above reviewed all the scenarios used for Network tournaments at GEN CON® 19 Game Fair during the weeks before the convention. Changes needed for Snowcrystal, STAR ONE, the Masters event, the TOP SECRET® Game event, and all the others were agreed upon by the member reviewers and HQ. The board then did all the editing and revision right here at the office. A few of the designers got their scenarios in extremely late, causing all the volunteers to put in several overnighters, and those scenarios did not get as much development as they should have. We expect that this problem will be alleviated as HQ builds up a library of scenarios so that substitutions can be made when a given scenario fails to appear on time, just as you suggested.

In terms of restrictions on content, I must point out that strict adherence to game rules is a Network tournament standard because of member request — not because of TSR decree. HQ is actually stricter on that point than the TSR design staff. Knowledge of game rules and the ability to use them properly during play is one of the criteria for our tournament scoring system, so it is important to avoid variants. When members sign up for an official Network AD&D® tournament, they expect it to be by the book, and we hear many complaints if it isn't. We have no objection to sponsoring an occasional variant tournament, but it would have to be billed as such from the start so that members know what to expect. In fact, we did exactly that at GEN CON 19 Game Fair with a "Fluffy Quest" tournament. But a designer cannot ask to have his material billed as Network standard and then refuse to adhere to the game rules in his design.

It may surprise you to know that nearly 50% of our tournament scenarios are now written by non-employees. Due to heavy demand, we do take some of our material from upcoming TSR product, as well as from the designers of other companies. However, TSR material is rewritten by volunteer members and HQ just as extensively as that of non-employees, and the same rigorous standards apply. Time constraints and lack of volunteer manpower has forced a few "fast-writes" to fill in the gaps, and that is why we need everyone to pitch in.

In any case, HQ does have the right of final approval on any scenario even after volunteer development. The reason is that we see ALL of the member response to all previous tournaments via the player and judge summary sheets, so we have a much better picture of what is acceptable to the participants and what isn't than any single designer. TSR's input is limited to rules points and legal considerations on scenarios involving its game systems, as is the right of all parent companies. TSR does not set the standards — the members do. HQ merely enforces them.

When you play or judge an RPGA Network event, it is your responsibility to fill out the summary sheets completely. That input is the basis for Network standards on future scenarios. If you don't tell us what you want, we can't provide it for you.

HQ will be setting up seminars to train interested members in tournament design and development. Anyone interested in putting in some volunteer hours working with the program is hereby invited to contact HQ. Guidelines and seminar schedules will be furnished through the Newszine shortly.

I should also point out that the tournament program and the Newszine are not limited to TSR games for their subject matter. We have sponsored official Network tournaments for the CALL OF CTHULHU™, PARANOIA™, DR. WHO, STAR TREK, and GHOSTBUSTERS Games, and tournaments for several other

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THE PLEBE ZONE

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by Steve Thearle

This is the story of two young men, both active gamers from Minnesota, who volunteered to help out at RPGA™ Network HQ before GEN CON® 19 Game Fair. Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, our heroes Steve Thearle and Rich Rydberg set off for Lake Geneva with expectations of rubbing shoulders with the high and mighty at TSR, Inc. Little did these two innocents know that they were heading for . . .

The Plebe Zone!

Initiation

After a grueling and somewhat hazardous six-hour drive to Lake Geneva, Rich and I finally arrived at the hallowed halls of TSR, Inc. on Saturday. The fortress looked impenetrable. Searching around, Rich spied a button next to a secondary door and pushed it. Instantly, a banshee-like wail went up inside the building. Wondering whether our lives were forfeit, we waited expectantly. The door opened and we were greeted by the RPGA™ Network gatekeeper and coordinator, Penny Petticord herself.

Nervously, we followed Penny into the mighty gaming fortress, where we were introduced to many of its denizens — some transient, and others who had permanent lairs there. Thinking that we were hot stuff, we made ourselves at home in a cubicle with John "Pencil-pusher" Vaccaro, another volunteer who had driven in from New York a couple of weeks before. John gave us the rundown on the rules of the fortress and showed us the important places — the vending machines, the copier, the computer printer, and the little boys' room. He solemnly added that anyone caught outside these areas without an official TSR inhabitant for an escort would be sent to the farthest layer of the Abyss.

After the exciting but uneventful tour of the facilities, we accompanied John on a tour of the mighty burg of Lake Geneva. First stop was the ever-lovely, ever-luxurious Hotel Skip. Located in a remote but quaint part of the town, the Hotel Skip is a living experience one won't soon forget. Unfortunately, all the rooms in the establishment were full, so we had to make do with the floor. When the unloading was done, John showed us where to obtain the items necessary for survival in Lake Geneva — the life-saving warehouse foods store.

Indenture

With all the excitment behind us, we headed back to eagerly begin our volunteer work at RPGA Network HQ. When we arrived at about 9:00 P.M., the place was still hopping with volunteers on many computer terminals. "Maybe they'll let us write a module," we murmured, "or possibly work on some character sheets!" We were rudely awakened when Penny handed us a 5'-tall stack of "Honor Guard" first round printouts.

Somewhat confused, we started to tear these into seperate units, only to be handed more and more. It seems that they were just waiting for two plebes to arrive so that they could unload the unskilled labor. (By the way, the word "plebe," as defined by my fellow adventurer Rich Rydberg, means something close to slave.) Hoping to improve our status from "plebe" to "gopher," we dove energetically into the enormous pile of modules that needed to be torn and separated, put together with maps and character sheets, then placed into envelopes, labeled with the appropriate GEN CON® 19 Game Fair event number and boxed.

On the next day, after a horror-filled night sleep-walking at the Hotel Skip, we were again greeted with more plebe work, including taking a paper cutter to all those little slips of paper that you had to fill out during the first round of each tournament. Between that and proofreading the BOOT HILL® module, we were very tired by the end of Sunday night — or was that Monday morning?

Monday morning dawned — or set — too early for us, but work had to be done or all those members of the RPGA Network wouldn't have tournaments to play at the convention. Today there was less plebe work, and we were assigned to other tasks, such as helping "Pencil-Pusher" Vaccaro with his earth-shaking plan to ORGANIZE the RPGA Network tournaments for the convention. Obviously John had spent too much time in the real world, since everyone knows that organizing the RPGA Network is akin to raising the Titanic! But, believe it or not, John came up with several ideas that helped the RPGA Network staff run the tournaments more smoothly than in past years. Rich and I were proud to be a part of this ground-breaking tradition.

Promotion

That night, the proverbial bat guano hit the fan. Penny, looking like the Grim Reaper on a bad day and getting about as much sleep as Atlas holding up the world, asked me to edit the D&D® module. That sounded easy, until I began reading Penny's manuscript. She had come up with this idea quite some time ago, and as time passed, the scenario evolved along different paths as she changed her mind about certain sections. However, the old parts hadn't been erased and the new parts had been added onto the end haphazardously.

Starting late on Tuesday, since the regular staff members occupied all the terminals during the day, I tried to make sense out of Penny's notes and formulate a plot. Meanwhile, my fellow adventurer Rich started working on characters for the module. At about 4:00 A.M. we hung up our keyboards and headed off to Hotel Skip.

Upon our arrival at TSR the next day, we were confronted by a distraught Penny who informed Rich that all the characters he had made up the day before had been eaten by a wandering monster inside the computer he was using. After doing a commendable impersonation of a man in his death throes, Rich resigned himself to working on the maps for the module. (Yes, you guessed it, the maps came after the module was written; cute, huh?)

All this time I was hacking the module into shape, inserting monster stats and such. By 8:00 P.M. I was finished — with Round 1, that is. Handing over the round to Rich to proofread, correct and add to as he saw fit, I stalked around TSR, Inc., rounding up anyone who didn't seem to be doing anything — a hard task on the night before GEN CON Game Fair. I managed to collect three other poor souls, whose names will remain anonymous to protect their lives from those of you who got killed in the final round, and we started throwing out ideas at around 10:00 P.M. Working together on two terminals, we managed to throw together the final round by 3:00 A.M., just in time to pack up our bags at the Hotel Skip and head for Milwaukee and GEN CON 19 Game Fair. We all (about nine of us at this time) piled into a room at the Ramada Inn and slept for about 2 hours.

Vacation

The day of the convention arrived, thank heaven, and I was free to game. Rich and I spent almost every waking hour gaming.

On Thursday, both of us were assigned to DM the dreaded "Fluffy Goes to Heck." After a few hours of getting ready to deal out some "punnishment," I was reassigned to run — you guessed it — the first round of the D&D® Game tournament! It went well enough, despite the fact that the maps had been lost somewhere between Lake Geneva and Milwaukee. It seemed that someone had a vendetta against Rich, and didn't want any of his hard work to appear at GEN CON Game Fair.

The con went too quickly, even with almost no sleep, and now I sit here waiting for next year. Maybe I'll volunteer again. Maybe I'll stay at the Hotel Skip again. Maybe I'll come for a longer stay next year. Maybe I'll write my own module next year! Maybe I'll co-write one with Gary Gygax! Maybe I'll be the first AD&D® Game player on the moon!! Maybe an intergalactic invasion force will pick me as the RPGA Network's representative to their planet!! Maybe I'll become a demi-god!!! Maybe . . . what's that, Penny? Next year I won't have it so easy?

THE BIG CON (and me)

Confessions of a Co-conniver

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by Skip Williams

I should have known.

I really should have known.

After spending several years of my life at TSR, Inc. with the dubious title of Convention Director, I should have remembered the sleepless nights, the constantly ringing phones (usually with insufferable idiots at the other end), and the thousand other annoyances, aggravations, and irritations that go along with organizing a national game convention.

Incredibly, I forgot.

I fell into GEN CON® 19 Game Fair by stages.

Stage One

It was a gloomy Wednesday afternoon in Lake Geneva. I was sitting in Su-Wing's Chinese Restaurant. Across the booth from me sat the ever-devious Penny Petticord, the RPGA™ Network coordinator and the world's most infamous schemer. The situation was not unusual — Su-Wing's is a favorite luncheon spot for those of us who work in and around TSR, Inc. Today's conversation would be slightly different than our usual friendly chat, however. The squad of jackbooted, goose-stepping turtles marching by the window in the booth should have warned me, but I've never been big on omens.

There I was, trying as usual to convince a waitress (any waitress) to produce a plate of barbecued ribs and keep the teapot filled, when Penny brought up the subject of tournaments. "I have this idea for the Master's tournament this year," she chirped.

"Oh?" I deadpanned, feigning disinterest.

What followed was a long session of gamerspeak. I sometimes wonder what the staff at Su-Wings thinks about our conversations. Somewhere during that bull session I volunteered not only to co-author the tournament, but to coordinate it as well. There was a certain cold, metallic sparkle in Penny's eyes as we left the restaurant.

Stage Two

I was sitting in a small car *en route* to Milwaukee. I looked out over the familiar southeastern Wisconsin landscape only to see a huge thunderstorm charging over the horizon on an intercept course. Penny was a fellow passenger; Frank Mentzer was at the wheel. Riding in an automobile with Frank requires a certain detachment, but, as I was securely strapped into the right front seat with the VW's engine between me and all but the worst of disasters, I was not overly worried. Then, it happened.

"Have you given any thought to the Masters characters?" asked Penny in a spritely voice from the back seat.

"Egads," I screamed mentally. "I thought she'd forget. Ummm," I replied, with feeling.

"Well?" demanded Frank, fixing me with a cool gaze.

"Right!" I replied quickly, partially because I had given the matter some thought, but mostly to get Frank's eyes back on the road. The three of us were soon immersed in another session of gamerspeak, which ended only when I had seen Frank and Penny on board a California-bound jet aircraft at Milwaukee's General Mitchell Field.

As I drove back to Lake Geneva through the thunderstorm which had just arrived, I pondered two questions. Why doesn't it ever rain on Mentzer? And why did I promise to have six characters all written up by the time Penny returned from Origins?

Stage Three

Penny invited me to join her at TSR, Inc. to complete the tournament. This, she said, would save time and avoid the problem of transferring the module from my home computer to the one at TSR, Inc. I accepted.

Unlike most gamers, I had no illusions about what TSR, Inc. looks like on the inside. I'd been there. The place is a maze. It looks like a cubist painting done by an artist who has spent too much time studying the cult of Cthulhu. This may be unkind of me, but it's hard to speak well of a place that's decorated in roughly the same colors as your high-school gym uniform (light gray and burgundy). Whenever I penetrate into the depths of TSR, Inc., I feel like a discarded garment shut away in an old locker.

Soon, however, Penny and I got down to work. We had always been kindred spirits of a sort, so the many distractions at HQ didn't bother us at all — well, most of them didn't, anyway.

As an ex-Convention Coordinator, I found it hard to ignore the frequent muttered profanities of the current staffers as they wrestled with a legion of unforeseen problems and the occasional thin scream emanating from what could only be the office of Marti Hayes, GEN CON Game Fair manager. Coming face-to-face with Marti one day, I saw the same jaundiced expression, bloodshot orbs, and sparkle of old perspiration that I had all too often seen in my own bathroom mirror in days gone by. Some things never change.

Stage Four

The convention staff was under siege by a horde of unprocessed pre-registration forms. Penny offered to suspend work on the tournament so that I could help. Thanks, Penny.

Throwing myself into this new task, I became thoroughly reacquainted with an old friend/adversary — the TSR computer. Like everything else involved in GEN CON Game Fair, it is capable but overworked. I soon remembered a few shortcuts that served to outweigh my general ineptness at a keyboard.

Stage Five

Penny had been temporarily swallowed up by some vital project. The Masters tournament waited for her return. I passed the time by doing a light edit on Rick Reid's "Fluffy Goes to Heck" tournament. The material was so funny that I chuckled even while I was attempting to perform surgery on Rick's less than functional grammar. I couldn't resist inserting a few funnies myself.

I rediscovered another function of the TSR computer — the ability to irretrievably delete huge blocks of text. I accidentally deleted over 1,000 lines of the "Fluffy" manuscript. I quickly turned to Al Buchholz, TSR's computer manager, and asked him to restore the text from the system's backup. I got positively angry when he laughed. Eventually, computer programmer Judy Gifford located the backup file and reloaded it for me. Penny rescinded the death-sentence she had passed on me, and I kissed Judy's hands.

Stage Six

In the eight days before the convention I acquired a total of four houseguests. My garage apartment began to look like a London subway station at the height of the blitz. Stories about "The Hotel Skip" begin to circulate at TSR, Inc. Most of them dealt with the establishment's surly innkeeper (me) and its ugly maid (name withheld, but his RPGA Network membership number is 18958).

I found some time to sneak off and work on the Masters tournament on my own. Soon the cube I had usurped was filled with the staccato clatter of four of my fingers punching computer keys. The general uproar faded into the background as I became absorbed in what I was doing.

Then my bubble burst. I found myself looking into the grinning face of a volunteer who had been foolish enough to shoulder the burden of pre-convention event organization. As usual, he was carrying a clipboard with several miles of paper stacked on it. This volunteer had spent long hours consigning column after column of hapless numbers to paper, and no one at HQ had ever had the nerve to ask him what he was doing. I had a sinking feeling that he was going to ask me for advice. Then it hit. "What should we call the people who assemble teams for the RPGA Network events

at the convention?" he asked with a straight face.

"How about using their names?" I suggested. His grin disappeared.

Penny popped in and said, "I like sheep herders!" The ends of our volunteer's mouth began to droop.

"Naw!" I cut in. "Gamers aren't like sheep. How about swineherds?" His frown deepened. I began to get more enthused. "Cowpokes? Traffic Cops? I know, Heralds! The swineherds had to yell a lot last year."

Our victim mumbled something to the effect that he considered all my suggestions except the last to be beneath contempt. I switched to Thesaurus Mode. "Baliffs, Umpires, Speakers, Whips..." His frown disappeared, but he was still in the cube. "Marshals," I said distractedly.

It took me a few minutes to realize that there were only a few motes of disturbed dust where the volunteer used to be standing. "I've got it!" I heard him exclaim in the distance. "We'll call them Marshals!" I began to feel like Jack Benny's joke writer.

Stage Seven

Penny and I finished the Masters tournament at 1:00 A.M. on Thursday, August 14th. Members Jay Tummelson, Dan Kramarsky, and Rembert Parker went through the manuscript with a fine-toothed comb. Incredibly, they found only a few problems. I went home to do something unusual — sleep.

At 4:00 A.M., my four houseguests arrived. The windows rattled as they boisterously packed for the convention. I considered killing them, but realized that the most dangerous weapon I owned was a potato peeler. I wrapped two pillows around my head and commanded myself to ignore them and go to sleep.

I never could take orders. After thirty minutes of outrageous noise, my guests left. They promptly held a very loud conference on how to get to Milwaukee — right under my bedroom window. I leaned out the window and gibbered at them. They interpreted these gibberings as directions to Milwaukee and drove off. I went to sleep.

Stage Eight

I stopped off at TSR, Inc. on my way to the convention to pick up a few printouts for Penny. Two and a half hours later, the printouts stopped printing out and I found myself in charge of a mountain of equipment and supplies to be shipped to the convention at the last minute. I hung around long enough to see this vital stuff — tournaments, cash boxes, credit card machines, and Marti's coffee maker — safely loaded into a van. Then I drove off to GEN CON Game Fair.

Stage Nine

After the events of the previous four weeks, the convention was a breeze. The only tight spot came on Thursday evening when I flatly told the coordinator of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Game tournament that I would not be available to judge the first round at 7:00 A.M. on Friday. I was commuting between Lake Geneva and Milwaukee during the show, and a 7:00 A.M. arrival meant a 5:00 A.M. departure. "I don't get up that early!" I exclaimed.

"What about your briefing for the Masters tournament?" asked Penny.

"What about it?" I snarled. "It isn't until two in the afternoon."

"Nope," she answered curtly. I shot Penny a glance that could kill creatures of less than four hit dice. "It's at 7:00 in the morning," she squeaked.

I considered throwing myself in front of a bus, but resolved to make the round anyway. I had a ball watching Peter Hague handle a truly tough Masters team. (Three of his six players went on to take first place awards.)

Stage Ten

As a reward for my diligent efforts in July and August, Marti offered me a part-time job at HQ. Weakened by my ordeal at the convention, I accepted. I spent many hours going through several bushels of unopened mail, but there were occasional distractions, like spelunking expeditions into TSR's dumpster to recover — well, never mind what. Only in America can a guy go from slave to ragpicker in just a few short weeks.

Final Note

The Hotel Skip will be C L O S E D next year. All those applying for lodgings will be summarily killed and fed to an otyugh[1].

1. From the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *Monster Manual*, ©1978 TSR Inc. All Rights Reserved.

continued from page 7

game systems are being planned for conventions next year. These scenarios may be written by anyone, but they must be approved and developed, if necessary, both by HQ and by the parent company which produces the game. TSR's approval is needed for most events because most designers want to write for the AD&D® Game.

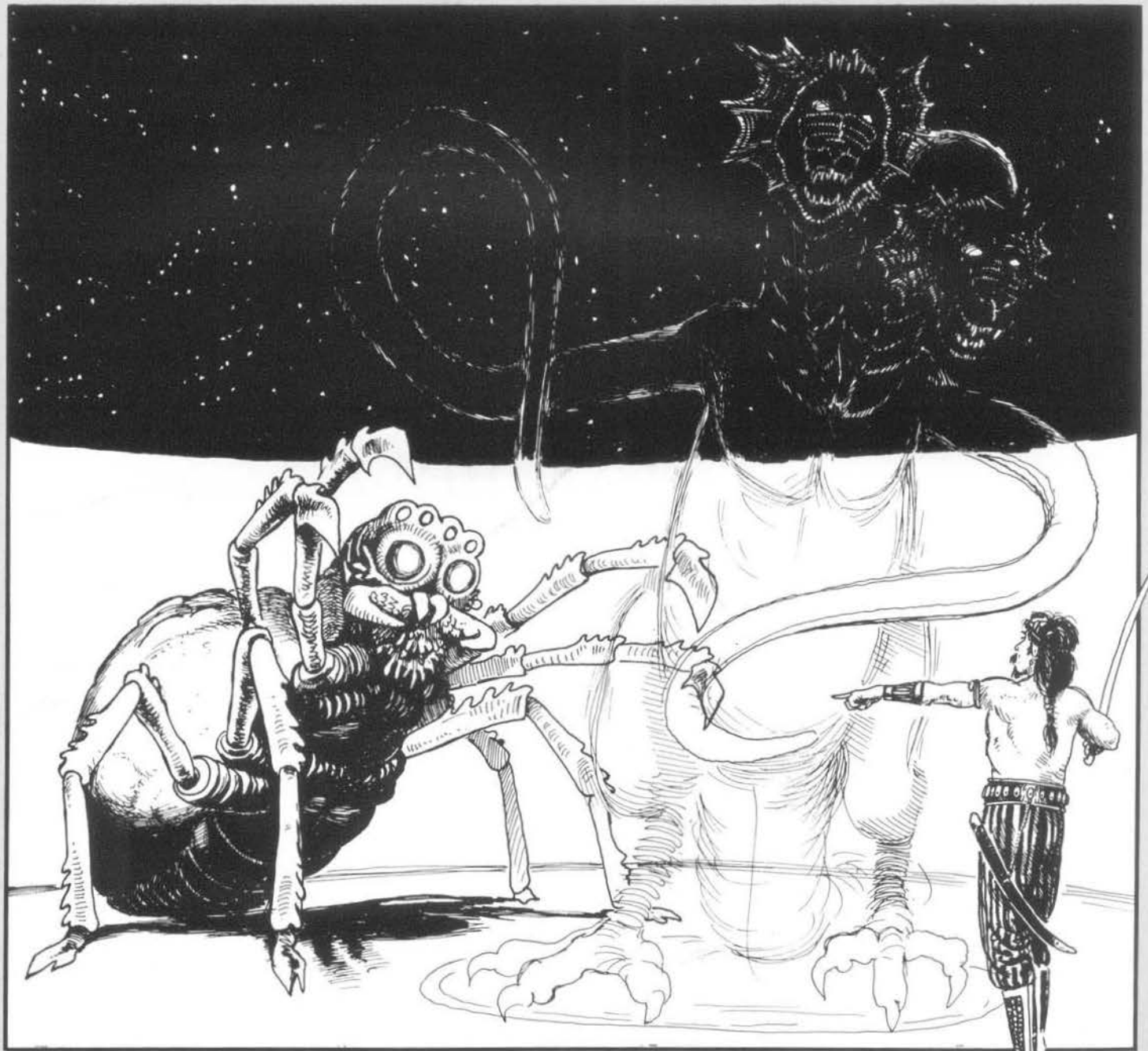
In the larger sense, however, the Network's relationship with TSR, Inc. is more than just a financial matter. RPGA is a trademark owned by TSR, Inc., and all rights to the name and associated products, such as the Newszine, are wholly owned by TSR. Increased cash flow would certainly make Network functions flow more smoothly, but it would not change that fact. Free memberships for judges is simply our way of welcoming good judges into the Network, though that may be made optional in the future. In the case of GEN CON® Game Fair, however, it does not affect cash flow at all; judges receive equal value in memberships in lieu of cash judge payments.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Mike's last comments. The Network will never reach its real potential unless YOU contribute. If you have good ideas, don't keep them to yourself! Write them up for the Newszine or as tournament scenarios and send them to HQ so that everyone can enjoy them. If your skill is finding the holes in tournament scenarios, quit complaining about them and put your skill to good use as a volunteer developer for HQ. If you are a born organizer with good bureaucratic skills, try coordinating a Network event at a local convention. Or just volunteer for scoring duty or office work. We need everyone's participation!

RAVAGER

by Jeff Grubb

PART 2 LORD OF DUST AND DEATH



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Background for the DM

In Part 1, published in Issue #30, the characters penetrated the tomb of Wardects, an elven cleric of Corellon Larethian, to recover an ancient tome known as the Astrolinth of Mirador. Upon entering the tomb, they discovered it empty. Following a passage that led deeper into the earth, they discovered the lair of a band of ghouls led by a ghast-lord, who turned out to be none other than the Patriarch Wardects himself, reduced both in body and in spirit. After a protracted battle with the ghouls and their gnoll compatriots, the characters discovered from the ghast-lord's ledger that the Astrolinth had been traded to someone called Zaybuz. They crossed a fiery chasm guarded by a barbed devil, and finally recovered the Astrolinth from Zaybuz, the mind-flayer, and returned it to the people of the Border Kingdoms.

The sages of the Border Kingdoms have determined from the book that The Ravager's invulnerability is probably the result of an ancient process described therein, in which the soul of a living person is linked with a venerated item of power through an arcane process known only to the rulers of the Gray Desert. This speculation is essentially correct, and in this case the item of power is the heart of Olman-Teht, last Mouli of the Gray Desert. The heart lies encased in crystal somewhere in the Mouli's tomb. In Part 2, the characters are commissioned to locate the heart and destroy it, thereby making the Ravager mortal once again.

In Part 3, the characters must seek out the now-mortal bandit-lord and defeat him before he can arrange for additional aid from the powers of darkness. They must penetrate his headquarters in Crydemon Mountain, defeat his lackeys, and finally face not only The Ravager, but an agent of Demogorgon as well.

Player Background

The Border Kingdoms surrounding the Gray Desert are being systematically raided — plundered by a mighty army of desert bandits. At the head of this army is a man known only as "The Ravager," a powerful tribal leader who is said to be immortal. Indeed, despite many battles and several assassination attempts, the agents of the Border Kingdoms have been unable to harm this bandit-lord, while his armies grow ever more powerful on the loot of plundered towns.

Yet there is one hope for defeating him — a hope founded on an ancient book found in a moldering tomb. The book describes a forgotten magical process which links the soul of a living person with a venerated item of power, making the subject invulnerable to all magical and physical attack. In the case of The Ravager, the item of power is believed to be the crystal-encased heart of Olman-Teht, last of the noble rulers (Moulis) of the desert civilization, and reputedly a distant ancestor of The Ravager himself.

Your party has been chosen for this mission because of your previous success with recovering the Astrolinth of Mirador from the patriarch Wardect's tomb. At the Council's request, you set off into the desert to seek the lost capital of the Desert Realm.

After many days travel, you have discovered the remains of a once-great city, now half-buried in sand. Tales of the nomads say that the Mouli's crypt lies somewhere within the Temple of the Faceless Sphinx in the center of the city. You must now locate the Temple, find the heart of Olman-Teht, and destroy it to make The Ravager mortal once again.

Encounter Key

Start

The characters will have no trouble locating the Temple of the Faceless Sphinx, as it is the only intact building left in the ruins. The rest of the city is empty save for the lairs of small desert creatures, sleeping quarters of off-duty guards, and a few burned-out campfires. In the far west, the party can see a major encampment of The Ravager's army.

The streets of this maze-like ruin are filled with soft dust. The city looks uninhabited, but it is difficult to tell in the gathering gloom.

Your search of the ruins has revealed only one intact building — a huge ebon-stone structure with a single western entrance.

This is obviously the temple you seek. The entrance is guarded by two broken statues of gynosphinxes with blank ovoids instead of faces.

1. Temple of the Faceless Sphinx

The Ravager has stationed a small unit of elite soldiers from his bandit army to guard the entrance to his ancestor's tomb. Their instructions are to admit no one except himself.

Guard shifts last 8 hours. There are two other shifts identical to this one elsewhere within the ruins. At any given time, one shift is on duty at the Temple, another is sleeping, and the third is relaxing off-duty. Both off duty shifts are housed in buildings on the fringes of the ruins and will not participate in combat.

At the time the characters arrive, Ptaroh-Kuard, the mage on duty, has just received a message from The Ravager describing troop movements and giving instructions for additional guardposts to be added. The message is on a scroll, and it is signed "Ibn ben Jarud, The Ravager."

Meanwhile, Ptaroh-Kuard's familiar, a huge black raven, perches outside on the Temple roof to wait, keeping watch for any intruders. When it sees strangers approaching the Temple from any direction, it greets them with, "Welcome pilgrims!" This, in turn, alerts those within the Temple, who prepare an ambush, as described below.

If the bandits are not warned, all 8 of them will be standing around the altar when the PCs arrive, talking with the mage. In that case, the characters have normal chances to surprise the bandits. Adjust the player information and NPC actions as needed to fit the situation.

1A. Ambush

As soon as they hear the raven's warning, the 8 bandits take cover behind the large pillars in the hall while the magic-user stands behind the altar and casts *protection from normal missiles* upon himself. If he has time, he then casts *explosive runes* upon The Ravager's message.

Inside is a single hall flanked by shattered columns, jagged like broken teeth, interrupting the deep shadows. At the end of the hall is a single gray stone altar, where a lone humanoid figure stands facing you. The setting sun catches something on the altar itself — a pool of liquid reflecting redly in the dying sun.

Since the bandits do not know how many intruders to expect, they leap out to engage one round after characters stop entering the Temple, or when the magic-user is endangered, shouting, "Death to the defilers!"

The two 7th-level fighters are armed with *two-handed scimitars +2*, and will try to engage the front line of the party (presumably the tough fighters). If they are free later, they will also deal with party members sneaking around the borders of the Temple. The 3rd-level fighters will attempt to cut off the party's retreat, attacking the rear party members from behind if possible, then engaging spellcasters. Thereafter, they will attack other characters as the situation permits.

Given a "normal" melee situation (i.e. the fighters are managing to hold off the party), Ptaroh-Kuard will first cast *web* across the Temple entrance to cut off the party's retreat, then *mirror image* upon himself, then *magic missiles* at any characters threatening to break through. As the characters come through or sneak around, the mage will bring his other spells into play, using *protection from normal missiles* on himself (if he has not done so already) or *charm* on any non-elvish character that gets close. (Note that a *charmed* character will not only cease to attack Ptaroh-Kuard, but will seek to defend him, though the spell will not turn a PC against his fellows unless the mage is threatened or meleed.)

All the fighters are fanatically loyal to The Ravager, and will fight to the last man, never checking morale. The magic-user, however, is a more reasonable man, and will surrender and cooperate if seriously threatened. He knows about the secret panel in the side of the altar. If coerced into accompanying the group, he will turn on them as soon as they are attacked. None of the bandits know anything about the Temple interior, as this detachment was only here to guard the entrance.

The temple area is a 30′ × 60′ rectangle, with 50′ between the stairs and the altar proper. It has no other visible exits. A secret panel (treat as a secret door) on the eastern side of the altar conceals

a lever which swings the whole altar aside, revealing a narrow set of stairs leading down. A hollow in the top of the alter holds a bowl of unholy water. This is what the PCs saw glinting in the sun.

Bandits: 6; AL CE; IN Average; SZ M; MV 9″; AC 7; STw 15, STs 16; F3; hp 25, 23, 21, 20, 14, 5; THAC0 18; #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon; XPV 160, 152, 144, 140, 116, 80.
Equipment (all): Studded leather armor; scimitar.

Bandit Leaders: 2; AL CE; IN High; SZ M; MV 9″; AC 7; STw 12, STs 13; F7; hp 37, 31; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2 (weapon); Dmg by weapon; XPV 745, 685.
Equipment (both): Studded leather armor; *scimitar +2*.

Ptaroh-Kuard: 1; AL CN; IN High; SZ M; MV 12″; AC 10; STw 9, STs 10; MU6; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1 weapon or spell; Dmg by weapon or spell; XPV 645.
Equipment: Dagger; scroll (message from The Ravager).
Spells Carried: *Magic missile* (x3); *charm person; mirror image; web; protection from normal missiles; explosive runes.*

2. Snake Pit

The narrow passage beneath the stone altar leads to a broad stair of gray stone, littered by dust and debris. The stairway ends in an underground chamber, once huge, but now reduced by collapsing ceilings to roughly 50′ by 30′. Gray pillars slant askew, stone blocks tilt at odd angles, wooden timbers lie uselessly on the floor, and debris is everywhere. Another exit is visible on the far side of the chamber.

This chamber is the lair of 150 normal snakes and 4 giant spitting cobras. The chamber is dark, and the snakes are not immediately visible.

A low, angry hissing arises as you approach. The ruins are laced with hundreds of snakes nesting in the fallen timbers and stonework! The largest of these snakes, a black cobra, is coiled up on a ledge 3′ from the doorway, ready to strike.

The normal snakes are harmless, and will not disturb the characters unless attacked. The giant spitting cobras take a dim view of those trespassing on their territory. If *speak with animals* is used, they can be convinced not to attack, and will grant safe passage across the room. They know not what lies beyond.

If the party makes a dash for it, the snakes will attack random characters as they cross. The cobras will return any attacks in kind, using their non-venomous brethren as cover. They will not pursue.

Snakes: 150; AL N; IN Animal; SZ S or M; MV 12″; AC 10; STs 17, STw 16; HD 1; hp 2 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1 bite; Dmg 1d2; XPV 12 each.

Giant Spitting Cobras: 4; AL N; IN Animal; SZ M; MV 12″; AC 5; STs 14, STw13; HD 4+2; hp 25, 24, 20, 17, 12; #AT 1 bite or spit; Dmg 1d3 + poison or poison; XP 135, 126, 117, 114, 105.
Special Attacks: Spit poison (10′ range, single target, save vs. poison or die); poisonous bite (save vs. poison or die).

3. The Composite Mummies

Past the serpent-inhabited ruins, the passage quickly descends, becoming a steep, narrow stairway once again. The walls are covered with faded pictographs from the Mouli's dynasty-tales. Scenes of madness and demons, evil semi-humans, and dark rites are illustrated with disturbing realism.

The stairway ends at the entrance to a large room with a high ceiling. It is dominated by six low altars; upon each rests a human skull. Along the wall are six metallic sarcophogi set on end. The cover of each sarcophogus shows a gilded human figure with a skull for a face. This skull motif is repeated in the inlaid floor, and golden death's-heads leer up at you, grinning.

This room is 50′ × 50′ × 20′ from floor to the damp gray stone ceiling. It serves as a tomb for some of the Mouli's retainers who were altered before burial. The floor detects as both trapped and magical. If any pressure is placed upon it (even so much as a coin), the lids of the sarcophogi spring open and six composite mummies emerge.

Composite mummies resemble normal mummies, except that they have the heads of crocodiles, hippos or jackals. There are two of each type. They are unarmed save for the jackal-mummies, who carry black iron ankhs. They will remain in their sarcophagi if the floor is not touched.

In addition, a colony of twelve stirges lives in the cracks in the ceiling. They will attack anyone who enters the room, beginning with *flying* characters. Dead stirges fall to the floor, springing the mummies, if they are not already out.

Composite Mummies (Crocodile): 2; AL LE; IN Low; SZ M; MV 6″; AC 3; STw 12, STs 13; HD 6+3; hp 24 each; THAC0 13; #AT 2 hands/1 bite; Dmg 1d12/1d12/2d4; XPV 1342 each.

Composite Mummies (Jackal): 2; AL LE; IN Low; SZ M; MV 6″; AC 3; STw 12, STs 13; HD 6+3; hp 21 each; THAC0 13; #AT 1 bite/1 ankh; Dmg 1d6/1d8; XPV 1318 each.

Composite Mummies (Hippo): 2; AL LE; IN Low; SZ M; MV 6″; AC 3; STw 12, STs 13; HD 6+3; hp 29 each; THAC0 13; Dmg 1d12/1d12/2d6; XPV 1382 each.
Special Attacks (All): Disease per touch (fatal in 1d6 months unless *cure disease* is applied; permanent loss of 2 charisma points for each month disease progresses; negates *cure wound* spells until cured; victim heals at 10% of normal rate); any creature seeing a mummy must save vs. spells or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds (+2 bonus to saving throw for humans; +1 bonus to all saves for each opponent over 6/mummy).
Special Defenses (All): +1 or better weapon to hit; immune to *sleep, charm, hold*, cold, poison, and paralysis; takes ½ damage from all magical weapons.
Notes (All): Magical fire does extra damage (+1/die); torch inflicts 1d3 points; holy water inflicts 1d8 points per vial; burning oil inflicts 1d8 points per vial on the first round, and 2d8 points the second; anyone slain by mummy is permanently dead unless *cure disease* and *raise dead* are used within 6 turns; *raise dead* kills composite mummy unless a save vs. spells is successful. (It cannot exist in its semi-human form alive.)

Stirges: 12; AL N; IN Animal; SZ S; MV 3″//18″ (MC C); AC 8; STs 17, STw 16; HD 1+1; hp 4 ea; THAC0 15; #AT 1 bite; Dmg 1d3 + special; XP 44 each.
Special Attacks: Attack as 4 HD creatures; inflicts 1d3 points of damage with successful hit, then automatic 1d4 points per round of blood drain thereafter, to 12 hp maximum before being sated.

4. The Ferryman

The passage leading out of the altar room descends again, deeper into Olman-Teht's hallowed earth. The gray walls are now wet with underground moisture, which quickly becomes a stream following along the left-hand wall. The passage soon levels out and opens to reveal a scummy green lake. On the far side of the lake, almost 50′ away, some man-made stonework protrudes above the water. On your side of the pond is a 10′ wide altar, inscribed with the following words in glowing letters:

IDGLOA'S FERRY
Cost of Passage
One Magical Item/Passenger

A mannish figure, whose flesh matches the gray-green hue of the water, stands on the far side of the pond, apparently waiting for your decision. His huge hands and feet and his large features seem out of place on his man-sized body.

The ferryman is Idgloa the algoid, oarsman of this miniature Styx. Those who are willing to pay his price are ferried across unharmed; those who seek passage by other means are punished.

The lake is 4′ deep at its deepest point, directly before the stonework dam. Those who wade or swim its icy green waters must save vs. spells or suffer a −1 penalty on "to hit" and damage rolls for 6 turns due to the life-draining nature of the cold.

Idgloa will not attack those who brave the green water, for they are already paying the price of their folly. But he lashes out with his *psionic blast* against any *flying* or *levitating* creatures. If that fails to bring them down, he intercepts them and melees when they reach the dam, since the ceiling of the passageway is not high enough for them to avoid his reach.

If any character places a magic item on the altar, Idgloa will bring his boat over and silently load that character and the item aboard, signalling the others to wait. He accepts *arrows +1*, po-

tions, and even items made magical by enchantment, such as *Nystul's magic aura* or *continual light* spells. He cannot really count, so he takes only those characters whom he has seen place an object upon the altar. If characters who have not paid try to climb into the boat or attack him, he overturns the boat and submerges, then melees any characters who are in the water. Idgloa will continue to overturn the boat from the water each time an attempt is made to right it.

His boat can hold up to two characters at a time. It takes one round to load passengers, three rounds to cross the lake, and one more round to debark.

Algoid: 1; AL CN; IN Semi-; SZ M; MV 6″; AC 5; STs 14, STw 13; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 2 fists; Dmg 1d10/1d10; XPV 405.

Special Abilities: Able to control two trees of a type found near water as treant. Controlled trees move at 3″ and attack 2/round for 1d10/1d10 points of damage.

Special Defenses: Can only be hit by blunt weapons (for full damage) or edged weapons of +2 or better enchantment (for half damage); immune to psionic attacks, *fireball*, and *lightning bolt*.

Special Attacks: Psionic blast once/day (psionic ability 110).

Notes: Takes 1d6 points of damage per caster level for *part water* and *lower water* spells. (Such spells will anger the algoid if cast on its pond.)

5. The Landing

The stonework on the other side of the lake is actually the top of a dam. Against the left wall of the cavern is a set of broad white marble steps, which leads down to a passage filled with white fountains spouting more of the green water. On the right wall across from the dam is a shallow cave. The bottom of the cave is littered with rags and weapons — obviously the loot from passengers who have used Idgloa's services.

The dam is 20′ tall and 2′ wide. The characters can descend from the landing without incident. Should they decide to investigate the treasure, they will incur the wrath of Idgloa the algoid if he is still around.

The top of the dam is narrow and slick. Anyone walking across it must save vs. wands or slip and fall off into the water (see **Encounter 4**) or 20′ down into the lower area (3d6 points of damage). Make such checks once per crossing, and once per round if combat occurs atop the dam.

The treasure of the algoid includes a *bowl of summoning water elementals* (labeled as such), a *mace +2*, a rotted *cloak of protection +2* (now useless), 3 dead *ioun stones* in a small bag, 1 iridescent spindle *ioun stone* (survival without air), a *potion of delusion* labelled "water breathing" (2 doses), a *ring of feather falling*, a *bag of holding* (ripped and useless), 3 *arrows +1*, and a locked chest containing a scroll (one spell, *rock to mud*). The chest has a poisoned needle trap on the lock (save vs. poison or die).

If the dam is destroyed, the water will seek its true level (the dotted line on the map), and characters must save vs. wands or take 1d6 points of damage from the rushing water. The weirds from **Encounter 6** will attack if the dam is broken, as will the algoid, should it still be alive.

6. The Palace of Waters

The stairs lead down to a 15′-wide passageway with white marble fountains set against both walls. Water flows in man-made channels along each wall to supply all the tiered pools and spurting fountains. The ground is firm, but sandy, and slopes upward to the corner.

There are neither creatures nor treasure in this part of the passage, only fountains of green water.

The passage turns south, leading past more fountains and pools that dot the walls on both sides. Far ahead, the water supply gives out, and the remaining fountains are nothing but empty shells filled with dust.

Two water weirds live in the pipes and channels of the Temple complex. In the last two rounds, each has moved into one of the last two full fountains and formed in its pool section. They will leap out and attack when the first characters pass, trying for surprise.

Any characters hit by a water weird must save vs. paralysis or be dragged into the pool, where they will drown in 1d4 rounds unless rescued. The water weirds attack only one person at a time, and concentrate on drowning that one before attacking others.

If the characters have raised a water elemental in their cause, the water weirds will try to control it and turn it against the party.

Water Weirds: 2; AL CE; IN Very; SZ L (10′+ long); MV 0//12″; AC 4; STs 16, STw 15; HD 3+3; hp 20, 18; THAC0 16; #AT 1 strike; Dmg Special; XP 450, 448.

Special Abilities: May control a water elemental on a die roll of 11 or better on 1d20.

Special Defenses: Takes only 1 point of damage per hit from edged weapons; takes half damage from fire-based magic (save for none); immune to most other attacks (see Notes).

Special Attacks: On a successful hit, the victim must save vs. paralysis or be dragged underwater; strikes as a 6 HD creature.

Notes: Forms from water in 2 rounds; takes full damage from blunt weapons; damage equal to its total hit points disrupts the water weird for 2 rounds; *purify water* spell kills it.

Water Elemental (if summoned): 1; AL N; IN Low; SZ L; MV 6″//18″; AC 2; STs 10, STw 9; HD 12; hp 48; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 5d6; XPV 3570.

Special Abilities: Can upset craft weighing up to 1 ton per HD; can slow or stop craft weighing up to 1 ton per hp.

Special Defenses: +2 or better weapon needed to hit.

Notes: Stays within 6″ of water; suffers a -1 point/die penalty on damage rolls when out of water.

7. The Haunts of the Stalkers

Fifty feet beyond the last fountains, a pair of gray pedestals flanks the corridor. Each gray stone pedestal supports a seated jackal. The animals are motionless, illuminated by a strange reddish light from above. Beyond the jackals, the corridor turns left. In the corner stands a statue of a bearded human in rich desert garb.

The *magic mouth* spell on this statue will activate when someone comes within 10′ of the jackals.

"I am Olman-Teht," says a deep voice from the statue. "My mortal remains have been desecrated; I cannot rest. Please, go inside with my servants Archaix and Relix, and set things right." As you watch, the light fades and the jackals turn their heads to regard you.

The "jackals" are actually jackalweres. They have been placed here by The Ravager to guard the tomb of his ancestor. They live off of fish from Idgloa's lake and occasional snakes. After they are introduced, they leap down off their pedestals and trot forward a few steps, then pause to look back at the group before proceeding.

If *speak with animals* is used, the "jackals" will converse with the caster, speaking in archaic accents. They introduce themselves as Archaix and Relix, servants of Olman-Teht entombed with him to serve as aides in his afterlife. They offer to act as guides through the next area, which they call "the haunts of the Hidden Stalkers." They maintain that The Ravager was able to pass them unharmed because the presence of a true descendant of Olman-Teht does not awaken them.

If they are attacked, or if their offer is rejected, they will use their gaze weapons immediately and initiate combat. If the characters do take them along, use the following description.

The sandy floor widens out to a large circular area, lit brightly by unseen sources. Its blue dome looks like a desert sky, laced with cracks of age. The area is empty save for a bronze arch 70′ away and several sand dunes. The dome is 40′ high at its zenith. Sniffing ahead, your wolf-like guides step cautiously into the sandy area.

The sandy area is the lair of a pair of dune stalkers, who are currently hiding behind sand dunes near the entrance.

At the halfway point, Archaix and Relix signal for you to halt, then they carefully move forward, testing the ground and confe-

ring with each other. After a brief discussion, held in low growls, the pair turns and faces you.

Characters in the front line must save vs. spells or fall asleep unless they specifically state that they are avoiding the creatures' gazes. Archaix and Relix will seek to take out the front line of the party, then melee with the rest. Characters who attempt to avoid their gaze gain a +2 bonus to their saving throws vs. the *sleep* effect, but suffer a −2 penalty on their "to hit" rolls. Apply both adjustments only during those rounds when a character's gaze is averted.

As the jackalweres attack from the front, the dune stalkers come out from behind sand dunes to attack from the rear. They attempt to use their "Kiss of Death" on good characters, ignoring the rest unless attacked. If that is not possible, they use their sonic attacks. The dune stalkers will not pursue, but the jackalweres will.

Jackalwere: 2; AL CE; IN Very; SZ SM; MV 12″; AC 4; STs 16, STw 15; HD 4; hp 18 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1 bite or 1 weapon; Dmg 2d4 or by weapon; XPV 872 each.
Special Defenses: Can only be hit by iron or magic weapons.
Special Attacks: Gaze attack (unsuspecting victims must save vs. spells or *sleep*).

Dune Stalkers: 2; AL NE; IN High; SZ M; MV 12″; AC 3; STs 14, STw 15; HD 6; hp 24, 21; THAC0 13; #AT 1, Dmg 2d6 or special; XPV 544, 526.
Special Defenses: 30% magic resistance.
Special Attacks: Sonic vibration (60′ range, Dmg 2d6, no save); Kiss of Death (touch attack, save vs. spells or die from sonic vibrations).
Notes: Tracks as an invisible stalker.

8. Gray Pillars

The passage from the dune stalkers' lair ends in a T-intersection. One leg goes north and ends in the rubble of a cave-in; the other goes south and ends in a large room. In the center of the room is a shallow reflecting pool, long-empty and filled with dust and debris. Five gray stone pillars stand at each side of the pool. At the far end of the room, flanked by columns, is a set of brass doors.

Each pillar in this 30′ × 50′ × 10′ room resembles a fighter, magic-user, or thief frozen in a hideous position, as if trapped in stone. The two columns flanking the doors depict a pair of women with snake-like tresses. These two gray statues come alive when anyone comes within 20′ of them, drawing long slender swords and blocking any further progress.

The snake-haired ladies are caryatid columns carved to resemble medusae. As before, characters averting their eyes suffer a −2 penalty on their "to hit" rolls while doing so. Of course, the columns have no gaze attack; they are simply normal caryatid columns carved in a decorative fashion. Their function is to protect the resting place of the mouli. The caryatid columns will pursue the desecrators even beyond the golden door.

Caryatid Column: 2; AL N; IN Non-; SZ M (7′); MV 6″; AC 6; STs 16, STw 15; HD 5; hp 22 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1 weapon; Dmg 2d8; XP 280 each.
Special Defenses: Takes half damage from normal weapons; takes full damage from magical weapons but without magical bonus; 25% chance (non-cumulative) for any weapon striking the column to snap (each "plus" reduces the chance by 5%, treat magic weapons with no "plus" as +1).

9. The Tomb of Olman-Teht

Through the brass door is large, opulent chamber. The walls are bedecked with rich, dusty tapestries, and the walls are lined with urns overflowing with gold and silver coins, each of which bears the likeness of the Mouli. The rotting remains of a human garbed in a gilded cloak rest on a small bier in the center of the room. The corpse wears a mask of solid gold. Across from your entrance the tapestries have been pulled down, revealing a great door made of gold.

As the characters enter, a resonant voice booms out, "Who dares to disturb my eternal rest?" The voice is only a *magic mouth* spell, and the characters can proceed without further incident. The corpse is that of Olman-Teht, and he is quite dead. Examination of his corpse reveals that the chest cavity of his body has been opened and the heart is missing.

The room measures 30′ x 30′ × 30′. Forty urns line the walls; each contains 500 silver pieces and 500 gold pieces. The spun gold cape is worth 3,000 gp, and the golden, gem-encrusted mask is worth 7,000 gp.

The golden door is a recent addition to the tomb, and it is unlocked and untrapped.

The door opens towards you to reveal a flat panel of what appears to be spun gold. It glitters in the light, like the surface of a vertical pool.

The gate is a two-way teleporter to **Encounter 10**.

10. Golem Isle

The heart of Olman-Teht powers a stone golem, which acts as its host and guardian. The golem was constructed as part of the arcane binding process which linked The Ravager's soul with the heart of his ancestor. Once the heart is destroyed, the golem is deactivated, and The Ravager is mortal once again.

The golem sits on the bottom of a vast lake, with only the top of its head and the fingers of its right hand protruding from the water. Set into its chest is a large crystal heart with a dark red mote at its center. This crystal heart is actually a set of three heart-shaped crystal cases which nest inside one another. The heart of Olman-Teht rests inside the innermost case. Each case is locked, and can be opened with a successful *open locks* roll or a *knock* spell, or shattered with 10 points of damage.

You step through the panel and emerge on a small island beneath an orange sky streaked with angry red clouds. The beach is bluish in tint and the water is red, like blood. The panel, a golden rectangle, hovers in the air behind you. There is nothing in sight as far as the red horizon save two other islands, one a gray dome 100′ offshore, the other a circular platform 20′ in diameter, some 30′ away, linked to your island by a wooden bridge. Upon the platform are four tall columns of gray stone approximately 15′ high, with a shorter, 5′ tall column to right. All of the columns bear inscriptions in a strange tongue.

The island upon which the characters arrive measure 20′ × 30′, and it is completely featureless save for the golden portal.

Though they do not realize it, the *teleportation* effect reduced the characters to a height of ½ inch for the tallest character, proportionately less for the others. The four tall columns are the fingers of a stone golem; the short one is the golem's right thumb. The domed island is the top of the golem's head.

The following inscription is engraved upon the fingers of the golem's right hand, one line per finger, the last line on the thumb. The inscription is written in the ancient language of the Gray Desert tribes.

We are one in death and life.
By the power of my name
I call forth the guardian
Of our joint power.
I am _____

The characters have 5 rounds after reaching the hand to complete the inscription correctly by adding The Ravager's true name to the last line. The name may simply be written in; it need not be engraved. (Note that "The Ravager" is an insufficient response; his true name is "Ibn ben Jarud," as shown on the scroll carried by Ptaroh-Kuard in **Encounter 1**.) If the characters complete the inscription correctly within the time limit, the golem stands up, carrying any characters on its hand upwards until they are level with its face. It then awaits instructions, and will take no further actions until given an order in the ancient tongue of the Gray Desert tribes.

The golem will rise from the water and attack if the inscription is completed incorrectly, or if anyone touches its heart, or if the characters stand on the hand for 5 rounds without completing the inscription. Its preprogrammed attack routine is as follows:

Round 1: The golem begins to rise. The hand begins to shake and the fingers bend inward.

Round 2: The hand closes. Any characters still upon it must save vs. death or take 3d10 points of damage and suffocate in 1d4 rounds.

Round 3: Bridge begins to break. The golem's head begins to rise from water.

Round 4: The golem raises its right hand, breaking the bridge. Any characters still on the bridge fall into the water.

Round 5: The golem raises its right hand to a height of 50' above the water, and begins to raise its left hand.

Round 6: The golem stands up, raises its left hand above its head, and opens its right hand.

Round 7: The golem smashes its left fist down onto its right hand. All characters still on the hand must save vs. death or take 5d10 points of damage.

Round 8: Repeat round 6.

Round 9: Repeat round 7.

If the golem has no victims "in hand," it will attack those that remain, affecting a 20' diameter area with each smash of its fist. The golem will interrupt its attack routine at any point to pluck off characters touching its crystal heart and drop them into the water.

Stone Golem: 1; AL N; IN Non-; SZ L (9'+); MV 6"; AC 5; STs 13, STw 12; HD 14; hp 60; THAC0 8; #AT 1; Dmg 3-24; XP 8950.

Special Defenses: Can only be hit by +2 weapon or better weapon.

Special Attacks: *Slow* one victim (1" range, once/2 rounds).

Notes: *Rock to mud slows* golem 2d6 rounds; *mud to rock* heals all damage; *stone to flesh* makes golem vulnerable to normal weapons.

PART 3 — CRYDEMON MOUNTAIN

Player Background

Your actions have bought a brief respite for the Border Kingdoms in their war against The Ravager. Soon after your group found the deserted capital city of the Gray Desert and disposed of Olman-Teht's heart, the bandit-lord's armies suffered their first defeat in battle. The Ravager and his armies have now retreated back into the desert to regroup.

But The Ravager has only been halted, not defeated. Rumors in the Border Kingdoms say the bandit-lord has taken refuge in a mountain fortress on the borders of his native desert. The fortress, built on the peak of Crydemon Mountain, was once an outpost of the Border Kingdoms. It is said that the evil leader is recovering there while researching dark sorceries and seeking powerful evil allies for his raids.

It falls to you, who have achieved so much in the past, to break into the fortress on Crydemon Mountain and defeat the now-mortal Ravager before he can bring new plagues upon the land. An assault on the forward face of the fortress would be folly, but there is another path into the upper reaches of the fort, built when it was controlled by the Border Kingdoms. A long winding stair was built up the far side of Crydemon Mountain, leading to a tunnel marked by a blue keystone. This tunnel leads through the peak itself into the upper tower of the fortress, where The Ravager is said to be working.

Encounter Key

Start

The Town Masters will provide the characters with any normal equipment desired.

You set out with the blessings of the Border Kingdoms, reaching the base of Crydemon by nightfall. A rider from the nearest friendly castle overtakes you with bad news; their plan has been compromised by a spy, who even now rides to warn The Ravager. If the attempt on Crydemon is to be successful, it must be made tonight.

1. Meeting by Moonlight

The characters can make their way through the forest to the base of the stairs without difficulty in about 1 hour.

Speed is of the essence, but you move as carefully and quietly as possible through the forest towards the base of Crydemon Mountain. A three-quarter moon rises over that tall crag, making it bright enough to see without torches. The forest itself is silent, as if all the wildlife has fled from the Ravager and his followers.

Ahead, the path widens into a glen at the steep foot of the mountain. The stairs begin here, leading 20' straight back to a landing, then turning left against the mountain wall and winding up the cliff. At the base of the stairs is a party of orcs armed with spears. On the first landing, an ugly one-eyed orc is bartering with a two-headed giant. They have not seen you, but you notice one orc sniffing the air, perhaps catching the scent of strangers on the cool breeze.

The characters may surprise the orcs and ettin if they are quiet and cautious. If the characters wait or try to hide, their presence will be detected in the next round by both the orcs and the ettin, and surprise will be lost.

The guard orcs and ettin will seek to close and melee with the characters. If the ettin is caught in missile fire with no one to fight, he will throw the case of mugs he carries up to 30' for 2d6 points of damage.

The orc witch doctor, a follower of Gruumsh, has already cast *protection from good* and *shield* upon himself before starting to haggle with the ettin. When the battle starts, he will cast spells from the line, using both magical and clerical spells as the situation warrants, and using his *wand of frost* to advantage. The *protection from good* spell has 10 rounds left to run, and the *shield* has 5 rounds left. The witch doctor will use an *ice storm* from his wand (1 charge) first, then his other spells as needed — *dispel magic* to overcome spells with duration, *push* to unbalance an opponent weighing less than 100 pounds, and *cause fear* if meleed.

The ettin has a pouch of 5 large gemstones (1,000 gp each), as well as a jade hammer he wears about his neck worth 100 gp. (Note which party member, if any, takes the hammer and whether that character wears it or tucks it away). The orc witch doctor has a bone-tipped *wand of frost* (5 charges), a jeweled holy symbol (an unblinking eye), and a case of 12 giant-sized bronze drinking mugs (worth 5 gp each). He also has a pouch containing the command words for the *wand*, written in Orcish.

Orc Witch Doctor: 1; AL LE; IN Average; SZ M; MV 9"; AC 5; STs 12, STw 11; HD 5; hp 15; THAC0 15; #AT 1 weapon or spell; Dmg by weapon or spell; XPV 210.

Special Attacks: Spells as 5th-level cleric and 2nd-level magic-user.

Spells Carried: *Detect good; resist fire; dispel magic; cause fear; chant* (x2); *protection from good; push; shield.*

Orcs: 10; AL LE; IN Low; SZ M (6'+); MV 9"; AC 6; STs 17, STw 16; HD 1; hp 7, 7, 7, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3, 3, 1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 or by weapon; XPV 17, 17, 17, 15, 15, 14, 14, 13, 13, 11.

Notes: -1 penalty "to hit" in sunlight; detect new construction 35%; detect slopes 25%.

Ettin: 1; AL CE; IN Low; SZ L (13'+); MV 12"; AC 3; STs 11, STw 10; HD 10; hp 48; THAC0 10; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/3d6; XPV 2622.

Special Defenses: Surprised 1/6.

2. Break in the Stairs

Having dispatched the orcs and their ettin compatriot, you begin the long ascent up Crydemon Mountain. The broad steps are hewn from gray granite, and each measures 2' deep and 20' wide from the mountain side to the outer stone railing. Stone gargoyles and grotesque demon statues stand mute guard every 100' or so. The stairs take you above the trees of the valley, and the cool breeze turns into a cold wind as you ascend.

The characters may progress up the stairs unhindered. The statues are harmless.

After a half-hour climb, you reach a section where the stairs have slid away, leaving a narrow 1′ – wide ledge along the mountainside. A loose pile of debris some 30′ below the ledge extends from one side of the gap to the other. The opposite ledge rises some 50′ from the far side of the debris and continues upward.

There is no danger of falling off the ledge if the characters are careful. They have the option of either picking their way across the ledge or descending to the loose rubble and climbing back up on the opposite side.

In either case, after the fourth person has crossed the ledge or entered the rubble area, a pair of perytons will attack. One goes after any lone character, the other engages the smaller of the groups. The perytons have a lair in the rubble of the slide, and they have been watching the party's progress, awaiting a good opportunity to attack.

The perytons prefer a human target to a demi-human one, and will continue to attack their chosen targets until either they or the perytons are dead. Upon killing an opponent, each creature will take one round to remove the victim's heart, then fly off to its lair, an unremarkable cavern hidden by rubble. The perytons will take a maximum of 2 hearts.

Peryton: 2; AL CE; IN Average; SZ M; MV 12″/21″ (MC C); AC 7; STs 16, STw 15; HD 4; hp 17 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 4d4; XPV 218 each.
Special Defenses: Can only be hit by magic weapons.
Special Attacks: +2 bonus "to hit" vs. single opponent.

3. Drum Solo

Several hours have passed since the damaged stairs and the perytons. The moon has reached zenith and is starting to descend to the west. The stairs, with their regular grotesque embellishments, finally end in a broad landing rimmed with broken statuary. On the landing are several large, round boulders. In the cliff face to the left is a large archway topped by a blue keystone.

Beyond the archway is a 20′-deep cave. A tymphanix, native to the elemental plane of earth, is kept here by the ettins in **Encounter 4** as a watchdog and an early-warning device.

The passageway through the arch opens into a shallow cave with an exit on the far end. Between you and the exit is a short creature that looks like a cross between a stone scorpion and a kettle drum. The gray creature clicks its pincers at you and drums its club-like tail against its top carapice, beating a warning.

If the characters are displaying the jade hammer worn by the ettin in Encounter 1, the tymphanix will allow the group to pass. Otherwise it will attack to prevent entry. It will pursue, catching up to the group 4 rounds into **Encounter 4**.

The tymphanix has its lair in the northwest part of the cave, behind a *wall of stone* cast at 15th-level. The dwarf or gnome can identify the wall as new construction, and bring it down in 30 minutes. The creature's lair has 9 gems worth 100 gp each, 2 *potions of healing*, and a *girdle of masculinity/femininity*.

Tymphanix: 1; AL N; IN Low; SZ L; MV 6″; AC 5; STs 13, STw 12; HD 7; hp 35; THAC0 13; #AT 2 pincers/1 club; Dmg 1d8/1d8/2d6; XPV 630.
Special Defenses: Immune to normal weapons; takes half damage (save for quarter) from fire, cold, and lightning attacks.
Notes: Drums on its hollow carapace to warn off strangers from its lair.

4. The Ettin Lair

The passageway from the scorpion-like creature's shallow cave climbs upward, becoming a set of stairs through the mountain itself. These steps are worn and rounded from the tread of many heavy feet over a long period of time.

4A. Ambush

If the ettins who live in this chamber have been warned by their tymphanix guard from **Encounter 3** that strangers are coming, they have set up an ambush to catch the characters as they enter. Two ettins have taken positions in alcoves on either side of the door, while the two-headed troll waits in the closet. Use the description below, and apply bonuses or penalties to the surprise roll as needed.

The passage opens into a large room filled with giant-sized furnishings. There is a great oak table in the center of the room, and a large closet on the north wall near the other exit. In the far corner, a two-headed giant sits snoozing in an oversized rocker, his twin chins resting on his chest.

The ettins by the doorway will fall on the sides of the party, and the rocking chair ettin and the troll will close to slay the characters. See **Detail Map 2**.

4B. Silent Approach

If the ettins have not been warned of the party's approach, they will all be sitting around the table listening to the two-headed troll outline a raiding plan. In that case, the characters have normal chances to surprise them. Adjust the player information given above accordingly.

Ettins: 3; AL CE; IN Low; SZ L (13′+); MV 12″; AC 3; STs 11, STw 10; HD 10; hp 53, 47, 38; THAC0 10; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/3d6; XPV 2692, 2608, 2482.
Special Defenses: Surprised 1/6.
Troll, Giant Two-Headed: 1; AL CE; IN Ave; SZ L (10′); MV 12″; AC 4; STs 11, STw 10; HD 10; hp 54; THAC0 10; #AT 4; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d10/1d10; XPV 2556.
Special Defenses: Regenerates 1 hp/round; surprised 1/6.

5. Lying Eye

The door opens on a stairway leading higher into Crydemon Mountain. You climb for a short while until you reach a broad landing. In the center of this platform is a large statue of a beholder, lit by a shaft of moonlight through a portal high in the mountainside. One of its eyes, a pale green gem, catches the light of the moon and glitters like a star.

The statue is exactly that — a statue of a beholder. The glittering eye, however, is a will-o-wisp. As the characters move through the room, it detaches from the beholder-statue and begins to dance about the room, glowing a pale green. The will-o-wisp continues to "sparkle" by concentrating its essence as it moves. It will not attack the characters here. Instead, it exits from the far side of the room up the stairs and tries to lead the characters into the trap in **Encounter 6** so that it can feed on the fleeing life forces. It will fight only if cornered.

Will-O-Wisp: 1; AL CE; IN Excellent; SZ S; MV 18″/18″ (MC A); MR special; AC -8; STs 11, STw 10; HD 9; hp 48; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8; XPV 1776.
Special Defenses: Immune to all spells except *magic missile*, *maze*, and *protection from evil*.
Notes: Reveals lair and treasure if reduced to 5 hp or less.

6. The Wooden Bridge

The point of light from the beholder's eye stays ahead of you all through this long, sloping corridor. At last, the passage opens into a shallow chasm, spanned by a old wooden bridge about 30′ long. The beholder light crosses the bridge and waits by the far exit, blinking.

The chasm is 20′ deep. The bridge is stout, strong wood at either end, but it has been almost eaten through at the 20′ mark by a dun pudding, which lairs in the stone at the far side of the bridge. When crossing, the front line must save vs. wands (with a +2 bonus to the saving throw if caution is used) or fall through the bridge into the chasm (3d6 points of damage). The dun pudding will then emerge to attack the remaining party members on top of the bridge.

If the pudding remains in one spot for 2 rounds to melee, the bridge will begin to shake violently as its structural intergrity is destroyed. It will collapse on the third round, but the fall does no damage to the pudding.

The bottom of the chasm is littered with trash and debris from the time when Crydemon was owned by the Border Kingdoms. It is

the home of an otyugh which peacefully co-exists with the pudding, feeding off whatever it drops. The otyugh will hide in the rubbish until someone falls (or desends) into the chasm, then it will attack any character that enters this area.

Pudding, Dun: 1; AL N; IN Non-; SZ M (6′ diameter); MV 12″; AC 7; STs 14, STw 13; HD 8 + 1; hp 54; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 4d6; XPV 1848.

Special Defenses: Immune to acid, cold and poison; lighting and weapon blows do no damage, but divide the creature into smaller puddings that flow back into the whole.

Notes: Fire and *magic missile* affect this creature normally.

Otyugh: 1; AL N; IN Low; SZ M-L; MV 6″; AC 3; STs 14, STw 13; HD 6; hp 34; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d4 + 1; XPV 972.

Special Defenses: Never surprised.

Special Attacks: Infects victim with typhus (90% chance) on successful hit.

7. The Patrol

The floor and walls are dusty in this section, and it looks like no one has passed through it for years. The passage widens, and two ledges form in the walls about 8′ off the ground, ending as the passage becomes a finished corridor at a low archway. Far ahead, torchlight is visible, and human voices speak in muffled tones.

The torches and voices belong to an exploration party from the fortress, acting on a spy's information that a secret passage exists through the mountain. The patrol consists of six humans led by a type II demon, and it will arrive in two rounds.

The demon has *detect invisibility* running, and can spot any character, even a thief, hiding on ground level. However, he isn't too bright, and will not look on the ledges, so any characters hiding there will not be noticed unless they move. If the characters choose to ambush the patrol from the ledges, give the patrol a +1 bonus on the surprise roll because of the demon's ability.

The demon will attack characters on sight, but the guards hang back, fighting only until the demon has taken considerable damage. At that point, they turn on the demon and attempt to kill it, for they fear the forces of darkness with which their leader now consorts.

Unless restrained, the guards will flee after the battle is over. If captured, they will give the group a partially accurate diagram of the inner fortress, and will accompany the party only as far as **Encounter 8**, where they will alert the guards if possible and turn on the party.

If the characters hide successfully, the patrol will go as far as the bridge before turning back. They will catch up with the characters 4 rounds into **Encounter 8** and attack from the rear.

Bandits: 3; AL CE; IN Average; SZ M; MV 9″; AC 7; STs 14, STw 13; F5; hp 33, 29, 25; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +1 (strength bonus); XPV 348, 324, 300.

Equipment (all): Ring mail; longsword.

Bandit Leaders: 3; AL CE; IN Average; SZ M; MV 9″; AC 5; STs 13, STw 12; F7; hp 46, 42, 37; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +2 (strength bonus); XPV 835, 795, 745.

Equipment (all): Scale mail; broadsword.

Demon (Type II): 1; AL CE; IN Low; SZ L; MV 6″; AC -2; STs 10, STw 9; MR 55%; HD 9; hp 34; THAC0 12; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/4d4; XPV 2408.

Special Abilities (at will): *Infravision; darkness, 15′ radius; teleportation; cause fear* (as a *wand of fear*); *levitate* (as an 8th-level magic-user); *detect invisible; telekinesis* (3,000 gp weight); *gate* in another type II demon (20% chance of success).

Special Defenses: 55% magic resistance; immune to normal fire; ½ damage from cold, electricity, magical fire or dragon breath, and gas; *mind blank; thought shield* (psionic strength 100).

Special Attacks: *Psychic crush* (psionic strength 100).

8. Guard Room

This corridor is finished stone, smooth and polished where the dust has been moved by the passing of the patrol. The passage climbs for a short distance, then ends in a panel left ajar by the patrol.

The panel leads to a guardroom where two guards pass the time with games.

Beyond the panel is a guardroom where two guards in sleeping leather are playing knucklebones. One sits on a large chest. There are two doors in this room; the one to the right is open, and there is the sound of military drill and clashing swords from within. The door to the left is closed.

The door to the right leads down a short staircase to a barracks area, where a large-scale armored drill is being run. Any undue noise or commotion in the upper guard room lasting for more than 1 round will alert the guards below that something is up, unless the characters close the door. If the party has evaded the patrol from **Encounter 7**, it will show up 4 rounds after the party enters this area.

The two guards in the upper room are armored only in sleeping leather, but they have longswords near at hand. Handle surprise normally, but the guards will set up a hue and cry to alert the others at the first opportunity unless prevented. If captured, the guards will reveal the information in the diary which one of them carries, plus the approximate number of opponents in the drill. They can also provide a rough diagram of the inhabited portion of the fortress. In exchange, they will ask for their lives, and may be convinced to join the party for a share of the spoils.

The men-at-arms practicing in the next room will enter only if alerted, and no special care will be taken to avoid ambush. They are armored only in practice leather, and they wield non-magical longswords. All are fanatically loyal to The Ravager, and none can be convinced to join the party. If there is trouble, five men-at-arms will run away to alert The Ravager.

One of the guards is carrying a diary written in Common, which details normal life in The Ravager's camp. The only entry of note is the last, which states: "His lordship Ravager has become more cautious since the recent battle, in which he was wounded, and for the first time since he has commanded the army, bled as a mortal. He has retired to his research area and the upper dome since then. Many of the men are troubled by this, and rumors spread that he is now dealing with darker forces of the Abyss. Though none will name the dark force, rumor says it is the Scaled One, who resembles an Ettin only in form."

The chest is locked and protected by a poisoned needle trap (save vs. poison or die). It contains 500 gp, plus spices and herbs worth another 1,000 gp.

Bandits: 2; AL CN; IN Average; SZ M; MV 9″; AC 7; STs 17, STw 16; F2; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; XPV 84 each.

Equipment (both): Leather armor; longsword.

Men-at-Arms: 10; AL LN; IN Low; SZ M; MV 9″; AC 8; STs 17, STw 16; F1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; XPV 28 each.

Equipment (all): Leather armor; longsword.

9. Space

The door opens easily, revealing a stairway leading up to a circular balcony which seems to hang in space. The entire room looks like an outpost floating in the night sky, as you can see neither sun nor moon, only the stars.

Beneath your feet is a nebulous cloud of swirling gas, glowing with a dim red light. This mass gives off a low discordant hum, much like the sound made by a bagpipe warming up. Another balcony similar to your own is visible 40′ away, with a similar stairway leading down from it.

This spherical room is covered by a *permanent illusion* of deep space. The walls near the door are glassy-smooth and slippery (−20% penalty to *climb walls*). Those falling into the bowl-like bottom will be carried to the gas cloud in the center, where they will apparently disappear. In reality, they fall a total of 20′ through the illusion and into a pit for 3d6 points of damage.

On the balcony are two black disks, each 2′ in diameter and 5″ thick, which radiate magic. They are *disks of levitation* which float along at any height specified by the user. Each disk is capable of supporting one character, plus equipment. They can be moved between the balconies by pushing off physically, or by simple commands in Common (forward, left, right, up, down, etc.) given by the rider. There is a third disk on the far balcony.

Note that a *dispel magic* will shut this strange planetarium off for 1 round, revealing the smooth stone walls and the pit at the bottom.

10. Ravager and Retriever

> The stairway leads up a short distance and opens into a larger domed room. The curved glass dome shows the true night sky, now beginning to lighten with the dawn. In the center of the room, a tall bronzed man stands arguing with a great, two-headed bipedal lizard with tentacles for arms. The creature stands within an enchanted circle, but its image is wavy and indistinct, and the stars show through it. To the left sits a huge 12′-tall spider, with cleaver-like legs, watching the exchange. The spider hisses loudly, like a snake, and the bronze man, obviously The Ravager, turns to respond.

The flickering image is that of Demogorgon, the Scaled One mentioned in the guard's diary. He is not present; he has sent his image and his servant, a retriever, to deal with the Ravager. The retriever will not attack unless threatened. No attacks will affect Demogorgon, although a *dispel magic* will break the link and cause the image to disappear. The Demogorgon-image radiates magic and evil, but it cannot attack, even if the magic circle is broken.

The Ravager wears a *cloak of protection +3*, *bracers of defense* (AC 4), and carries Magebane, a curved magic cutlass. Magebane is +2, +4 vs. magic-users and enchanted creatures, and has a special purpose to slay magic-users. When Magebane strikes a magic-user, the victim must save vs. spells or go insane for 1d4 rounds, attacking all nearby. Magebane is chaotic evil, and has the following abilities: *detect good*, *detect invisible*, and *strength* (wielder only). The latter has been used to raise The Ravager's strength score from its normal 17 to 18(30).

The Ravager will fight until his hit points have been reduced to ¼ of original. He will then turn to flee, but the retriever will block his retreat. If The Ravager is caught, slain, or incapacitated, the retriever will take the body (attempting to slay any who get in the way) and return with it to Demogorgon's level of the Abyss.

If the retriever is attacked, it will use its eye rays first, saving the transmutation ray for The Ravager, should he decide to run. After all eye rays are used, it will attack with its cleavers while they recharge.

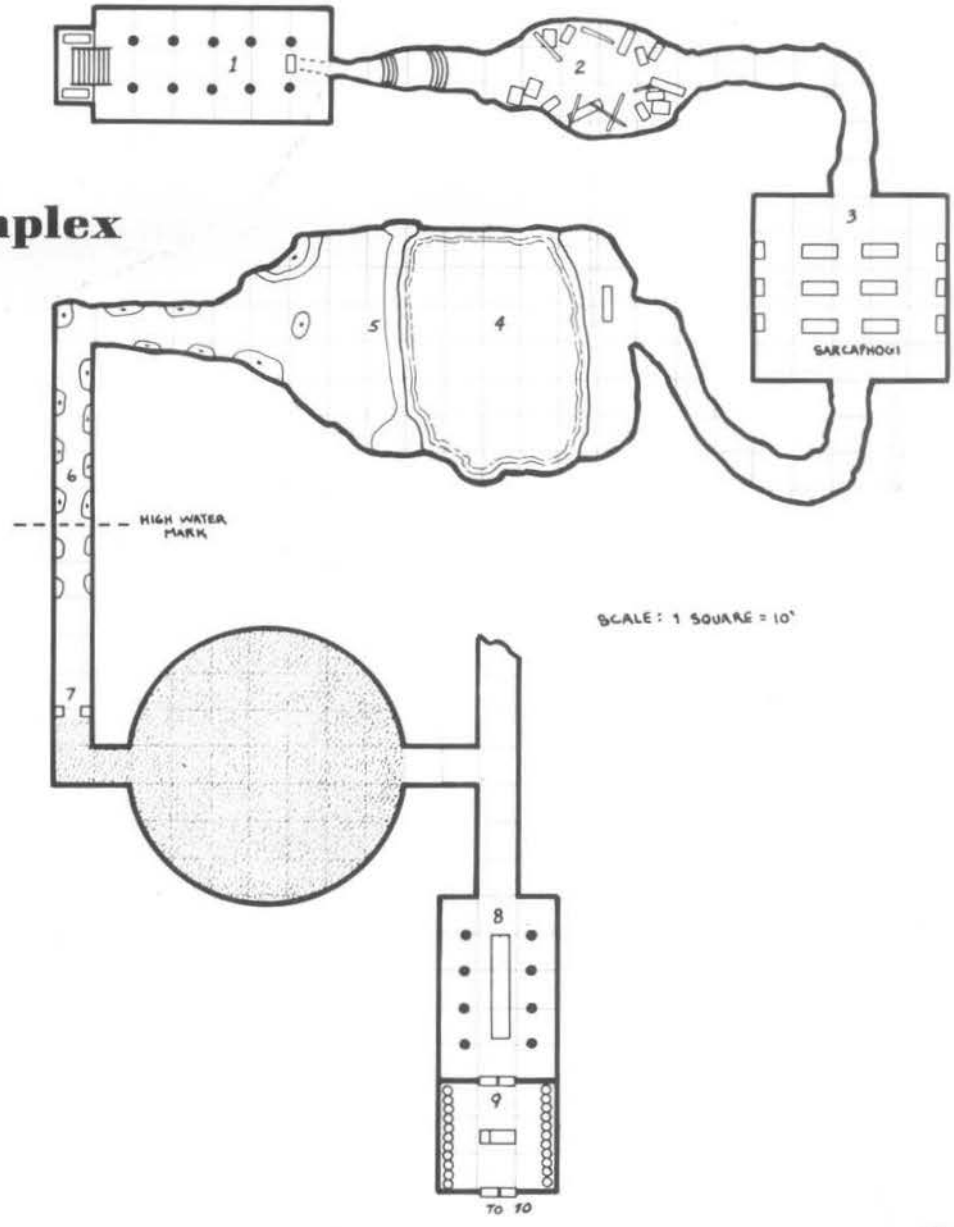
Retriever: 1; AL CE; IN Low; SZ L (12′); MV 18″; STs 11, STw 10; HD 10; hp 50; AC -2; THAC0 10; #AT 4; Dmg 3d6/3d6/3d6/3d6; XPV 5650.

Special Abilities: *fear* (30′ range, save vs. spells or run).

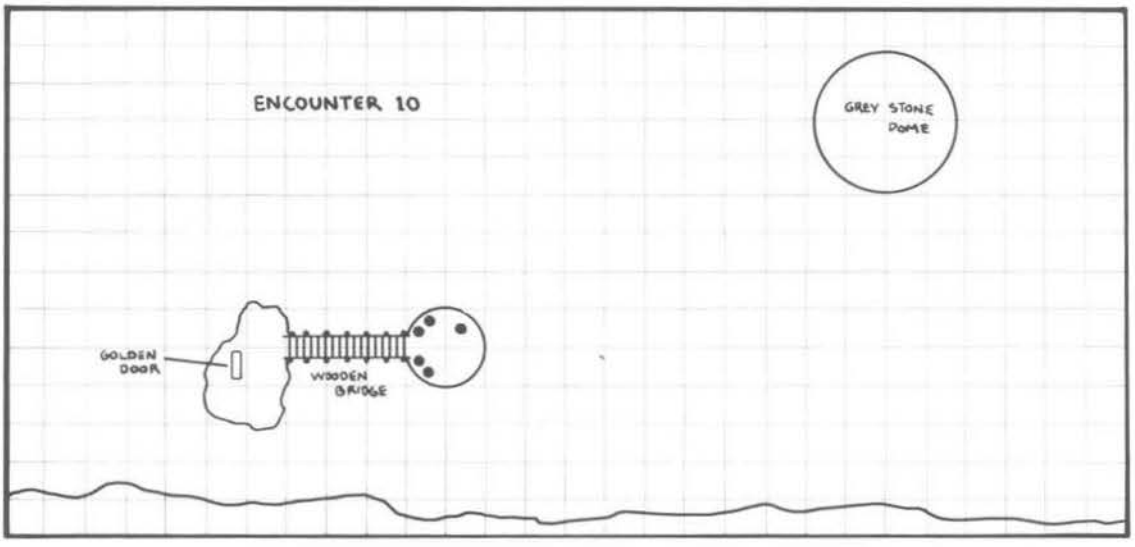
Special Attacks: Eye rays — fire, cold, lightning (damage equal to current hp, save vs. dragon breath for ½ damage) or transmutation (save vs. petrification or be turned to mud, stone, gold, or lead, random determination), each once per 6 rounds to 60′ range, two per round maximum, no eye attack if striking.

The Ravager: 1; AL CE; IN High; SZ M; MV 12″; AC 1; STs 8, STw 7; F13; hp 61; THAC0 8; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon +4 (extra vs. mages); XPV 5998.

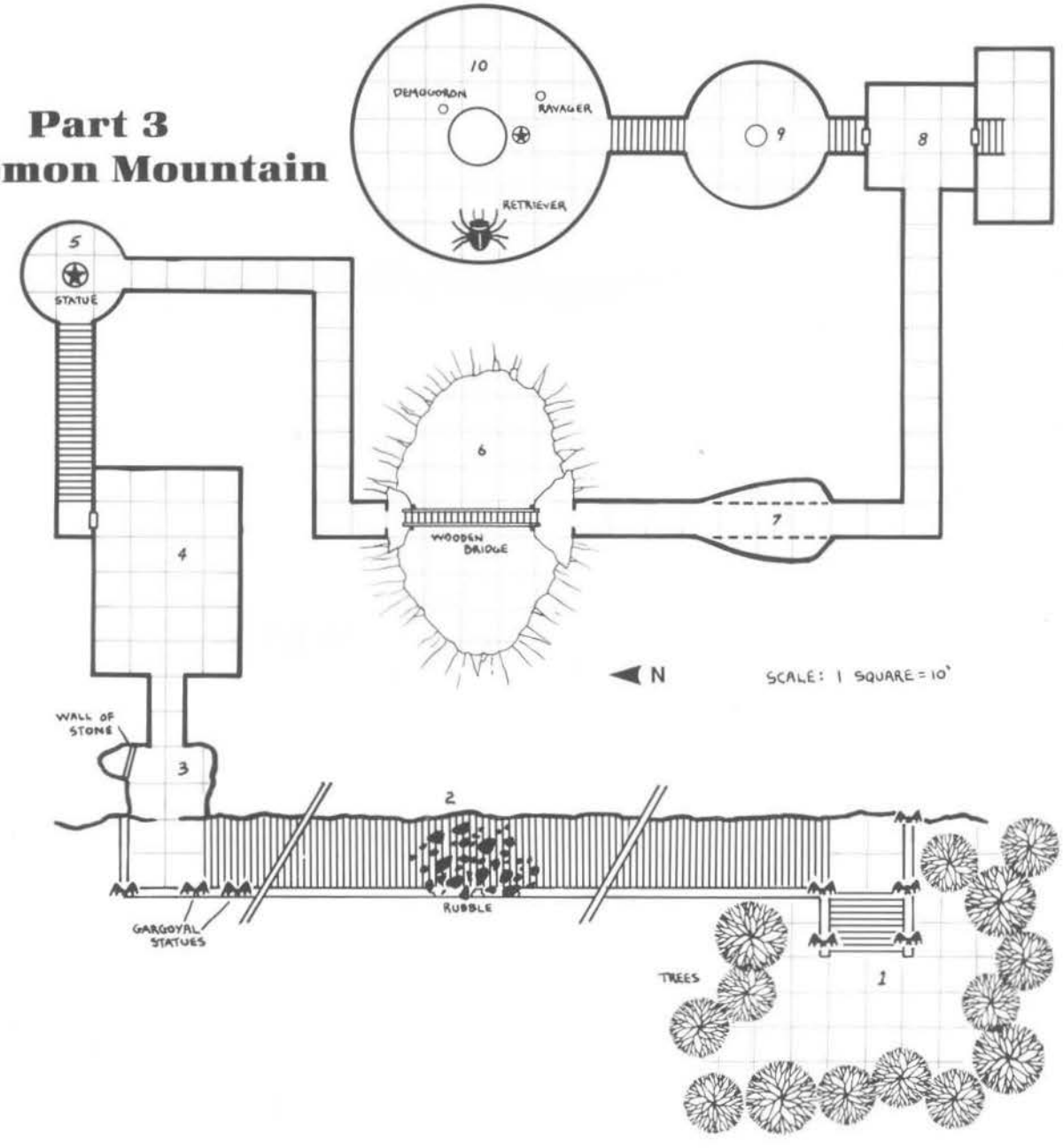
Part 2
The Tomb Complex



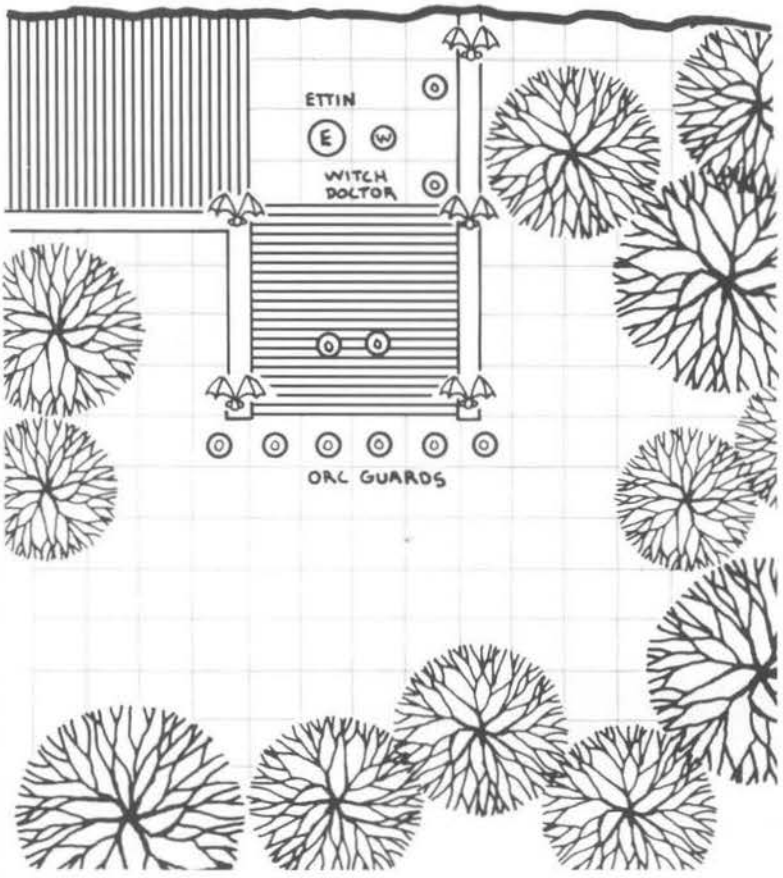
Detail of Encounter 10 (in the tomb complex)



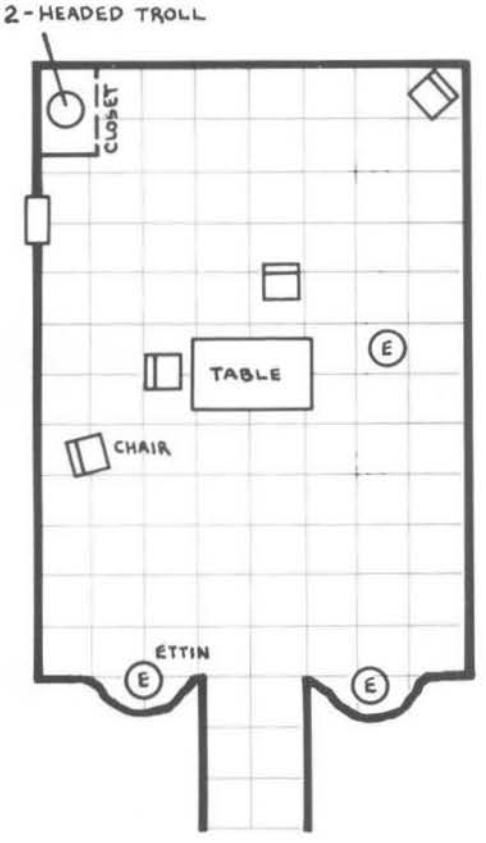
Part 3 Crydemon Mountain



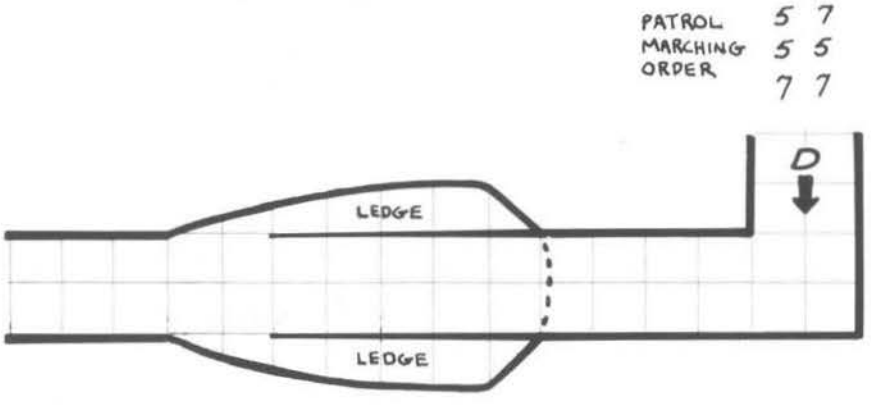
Detail of Encounter 1 (Crydemon Mountain)



Detail of Encounter 4 Ettin Lair (Crydemon Mountain)



Detail of Encounter 7 The Patrol (Crydemon Mountain)



RPGA™ Network Tournament Winners List

The following conventions have held official RPGA Network Tournaments. Congratulations to all the winners! This listing includes data from several conventions which have not yet been reported in the Newszine.

GEN CON® 18 Game Fair

(August 22-25, 1985 — Milwaukee, Wisconsin)

AD&D® Game Open Tournament

"Snowcrystal Odessey IV: Fletch" (by Michael Przytarski & Co.)
Tournament Coordinator: Michael Przytarski

1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
Sherry Dees	Joe Laidlaw	Bill Bishop
Les Hahn	Karl Larsen	Steve Cacciatore
Don Herz	Roger Mlynczak	Dave Heys
Jon Masyga	Dave White	Doug Wood

NOWSCON '85

(September 28 & 29, 1985 — Cleveland, Ohio)

AD&D® Game Open Tournament

"Ravager" (by Jeff Grubb)
Tournament Coordinator: John Goering

1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
Louise Shook	Tim Miller	Michael Reitzel

COUNCIL OF FIVE NATIONS '85

(October 11-13, 1985 — Schenectady, New York)

AD&D® Game Open Tournament

"Palace of the Vampire Queen"
Tournament Coordinator: Pamela Boynton

1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
Wes Meador	Paul Bosselait	Bill Stevens

OCTOBERCON '85

(October 19, 1985 — Elkhart, Indiana)

AD&D® Game Open Tournament

"Baltron's Beacon" (by Phil Meyers)
Tournament Coordinator: Mike Gawlik

1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
Don Bingle	Linda Bingle	Gor Brigham
Stan Mitchell	Roger Eppich	Jim Wade

OCTOBER FANTASY REVEL 1985

(October 26 & 27, 1985 — West Bend, Wisconsin)

AD&D® Game Open Tournament

"Sands of Time" (by Keith Polster)
Tournament Coordinator: Keith Polster

1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
Mark Minz	Bruce Anspach	Gerry Orten
Rich Rydberg	Frank Vetrovec	Steve Thearle

SHOW-ME CON I

(November 30 - December 1, 1985 — Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri)

AD&D® Game Open Tournament

"Ravager" (by Jeff Grubb)
Tournament Coordinator: Brian Leikam

1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
Bob Pennone	Tim Barker	Bruce Bedell

DEN CON I

(January 11, 1986 — Palm Bay, Florida)

AD&D® Game Open Tournament

"Swords of Deceit" (by Stephen Bourne, Micahel Dobson, & Ken Rolston)
Tournament Coordinator: Stanley Oien

1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
Robert Farnsworth	Fred Best	Sterl Devlin
Richard McLaughlin	Randy Hoopes	Aaron England
Steve Null	Martin Lee	Bryan McAninley
Stacey Wagoner	Ron Reeves	Scott Yates

GEN CON® 19 Game Fair

(August 14-17, 1986 — Milwaukee, Wisconsin)

AD&D® Game Open Special Tournament

"Honor Guard" (by Dan Kramarsky)
Tournament Coordinator: John Cereso

1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
S. Eric Field	Ron Armstrong	Scott Brown
Marc Hagen	Ricky Birchett	Rob Eaman
Peter Hentles	David Girard	Eric Folk
Dave House	Chris Meador	Fran Hart
Japji Khalsa	Corbett Ray	Scott Heverly
Ray Powers	Dirk Schaffer	Martha McCray
Adam Steely	Chris Schon	Marshall Simpson
Malcom Wood	James Terry	Kevin Webster

Corrections to Previous Standings

ORIGINS '85

The results from this convention were returned to HQ incomplete. Several player and DM voting sheets were missing, and several scores had been added incorrectly in voting. These placings are the result of processing the available data. They are listed again here because several do not agree with the previous listing for this convention. In many cases, this is due to one or more missing sheets from a team. In other cases, players were disqualified for not following directions. These placings will stand until such time as any missing data is returned to our office, at which time we will be happy to recalculate.

Also, we have no addresses for the judges who ran these two events, save those who were already members. We would like to award them their memberships, so if you know any of the judges, please have them forward their addresses to HQ.

AD&D® Game Open Tournament

"Dark Clouds Gather" (by Jim Bambra and Phil Gallagher)
Tournament Coordinator: Esther Hartmann

1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
Bruce Abrahams	Charles Boutin	Dan Gainor
Rubin Bard	John DeAngelis	Alan Miller
Ken Cline	Vin Manna	Dan Miller
Richard Fetter	Greg Mavrone	Richard Piercy
Bill Milton	Karen Peters	James Rouselle
John Phillips	Sandi Sherman	Brian Safigan
Dave Simmons	Dave Slater	Dee Smith
John Vaccaro	Lee Thompson	Max Waggoner

AD&D® Game Members Tournament

"Isle of the Ape" (by Gary Gygax)
Tournament Coordinator: Esther Hartmann

1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
Paul Bosselait	Nancy Gover	Gordon Gover
Pam Boynton	Craig Robertson	Don MacLeane
Todd Goldman	Dave Simmons	George Shevich
Tim Smith	Bill Stevens	

A GAMMA WORLD® GAME FEATURE

ALIENS

and the cryptic alliances

by James M. Ward

The 3rd Edition GAMMA WORLD® Game introduced new Tech Level V devices, powerful crystalline artifacts of unknown, presumably alien origin. In the last issue, author Jim Ward suggested that these devices were all that remained of alien visitors who were unprepared for the deadly perils of this changed earth. In this article, Jim explores the errors made by these alien visitors.

From the Quill of
Estelroth Twilight
Keeper of the Everlasting Light

The Story of the Outsiders

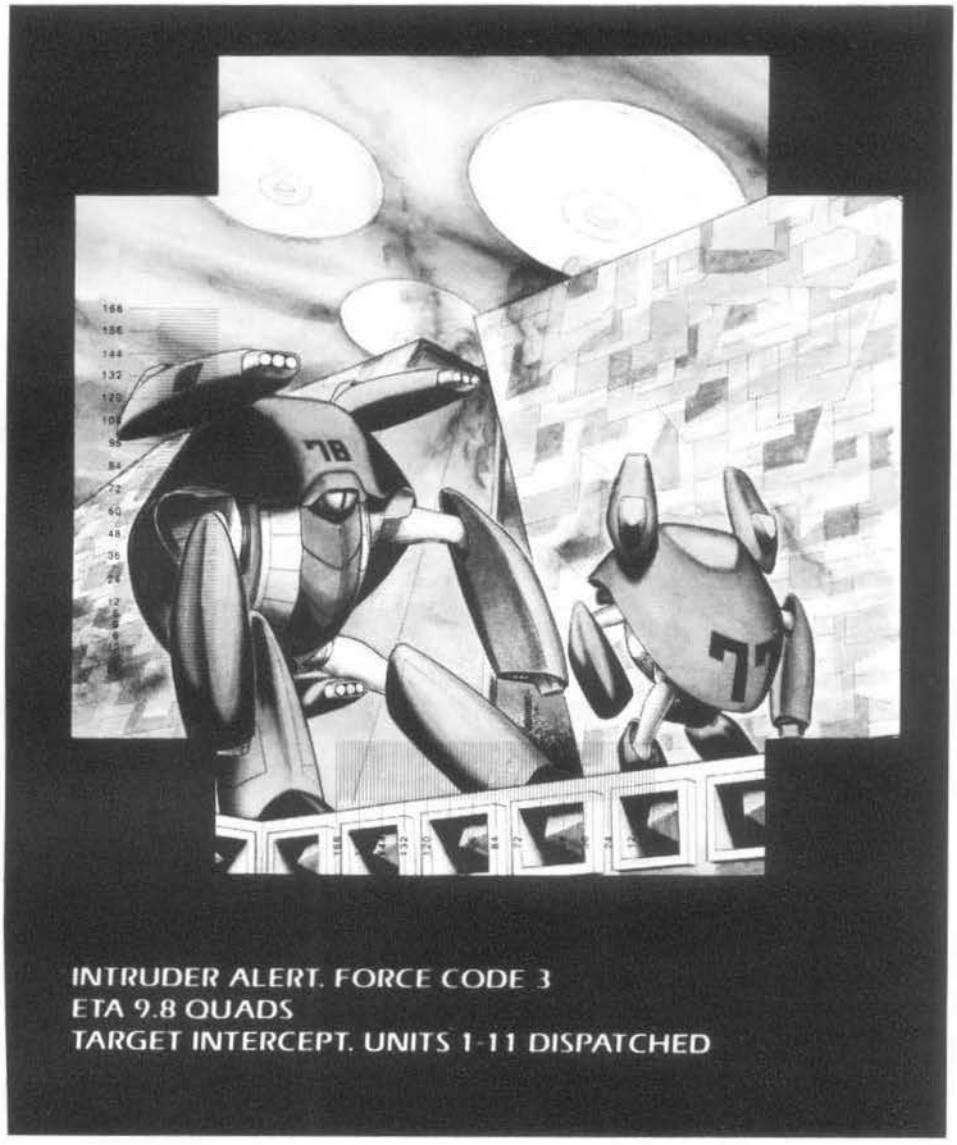
. . . Listen well, as I recount the visits of the Outsiders — those who are not of this world, but who came seeking to dominate and exploit the wonders the Ancients had left behind. Learn from their mistakes and foibles so that you may know the weaknesses of the foe. Let not the warning of their failed visit leave us unprepared should they ever choose to return.

Why the Outsiders were drawn to this world, we do not know. The Keepers suspect that they came to steal the many natural and unnatural treasures of the land. Perhaps the presence of the Earth Poison which created the Changed and reshaped our world intrigued them. Then again, perhaps the Outsiders sought to steal unique crystals from the heart of our land to power their devices. Whatever their nefarious purpose, they required large numbers of indigenous life forms to complete their mission for them, for they could not achieve their goals alone. Therefore, they made attempts to infiltrate and manipulate the powerful Cryptic Alliances which hold sway in the lands of man and mutant, and sought to reshape the nations of our world.

The Outsiders proved very formal, inflexible, and unimaginative in their approach to manipulating us, the Ancients' Children. In their repeated attempts to gain control of various Cryptic Alliances, they have been discovered five times, each time at a different stage of what appears to be the same five-step plan. Here then are the tales of their attempts, and of their documented failures, which resulted in the ultimate withdrawl of the Outsiders from our planet.

Plan for Cryptic Alliance Manipulation

1. Infiltration
2. Build Dependency
3. Become a Local Hero
4. Gain Leadership of Local Cult
5. Become Advisor to the Alliance Chieftain



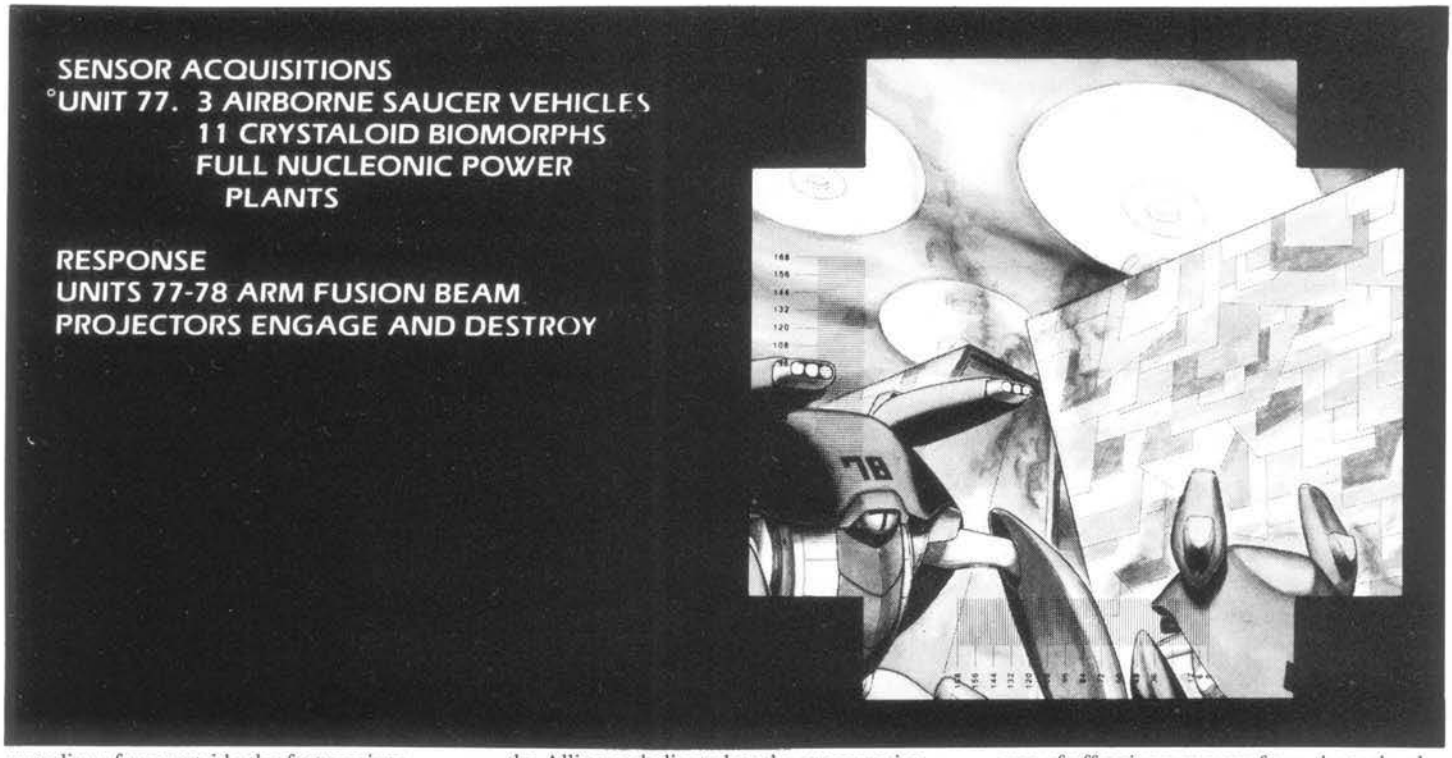
Stage 1: Infiltration

It seems that when the Outsiders choose an Alliance to infiltrate, they first devote a period of four or more seasons to studying their subject from afar. When their study is finished, they capture one or two members of the Alliance they are observing, presumably in an attempt to analyze their subject more closely. Then the Outsiders replace their captives with perfect duplicates. These imposters are artificial creatures with a hidden, internal crystalline structure. They are nearly indistinguishable from True Children except upon death, when they shatter into a thousand glass shards. If these Imposters can survive two seasons within the society, the Outsiders move on to Stage Two of their plot.

Infiltration of the Created

The Outsiders, who seem to call themselves the Zim, first attempted to infiltrate the Alliance of the Created — that secret society of artificial beings and metallic servants of the Ancients which is dedicated to control or eradication of all living intelligent life. Their error was in their choice of captives. They approached a stronghold of these Machinists with three saucer-shaped skyships, apparently intending to capture two of the Created who were conveniently stationed outside the fortress.

But the very presence of the invaders activated the defenses of the Ancients. Wicked blue lightnings spat forth and crumpled the lead ship like a rotten log. The surviving two skycraft lifted the two metallic



guardians from outside the fortress into their holds and fled from the deadly fire.

Unfortunately, these two guardians were of the variety named by the Ancients as Defense Borgs. Even as the Outsiders brought them aboard their vessels, the Borgs activated their internal defensive armament. The resulting blasts burst the two retreating saucers open like ripe melons. The Borgs dropped 1,000 meters safely to the earth and returned to their guardposts.

We can only speculate on the confusion which must have faced the Outsiders' commanders when contact with the scouts was abruptly cut off. Apparently deciding that additional study was needed, the Zim have taken no further actions against the Created since that time.

Stage 2. Dependency

Subsequent exposure of several crystalloid duplicates in various locations has revealed that the Zim did successfully infiltrate other Cryptic Alliances. The duplicates immediately attempted to become indispensible to largest group in the alliance by providing its leaders with high technology items, particularly those of crystalline form. To avoid drawing attention to themselves, the agents of the Zim would "discover" these items among caches of the Ancients and present them to the alliance for the common good.

Though use of these unnatural devices has proven difficult, the Imposters were quick to gain apparent mastery and were always willing to teach others how to use them. The Keepers suspect that the Zim provided these items in the hopes that the members of the alliance would come to depend upon a technology which they neither understood nor controlled, and on the agents who could provide it.

Artifacts for the Archivists

The records show that the Zim had successfully infiltrated the cult of the Archivists — the Alliance dedicated to the preservation and worship of Ancient technology. The crystalloid imposters "discovered" a vast cache of crystal technology in an abandoned Ancient ruin and promptly presented it to the Archivist elders. However, instead of seeking to gain mastery of the strange items, the elders confiscated them and placed them within a hidden cavern considered sacred to the cult and off limits to all but the members of highest status.

The Zim must have felt that the Servants of the Eye were afraid of ruining these few artifacts by experimenting with them, and they responded by "discovering" several additional caches of lost treasures. These too, however, were confiscated, and no action was taken to utilize this technology. Indeed, a holy edict was issued, and all alliance members were set to risking their lives to excavate the entire abandoned ruin in an effort to locate more of these amazing devices.

It is reported that the imposters attempted to dissuade their superiors from implementing this decision. Indeed, many tons of artifacts were unearthed and secreted away in the hidden vaults of the Alliance. The Keepers speculate that this must have severely taxed the Outsiders' stores.

The affair ended when the two constructs attempted to lead a revolt to liberate the hoarded artifacts and put them to use. They were unmasked and destroyed. Nor have the Archivists been bothered again, though they are still recovering from the losses they suffered due to their suicidal excavations.

Stage 3. Hero

Once the Zim have succeeded in infiltrating and building dependency, they attempt to build up the popularity of their agents among the membership and make them cult heroes. From this hero status, the bridge to local leadership becomes much more accessible. These heroes tend to specialize in the use of offensive weapons from the technology they introduced to the cult.

Heroism in the Ranks of the Fit

The Zim had managed to infiltrate the Ranks of the Fit — that Alliance dedicated to subjugation of the land. Their guise was that of two pure strain humans, classified as "buck privates" within this conquering army. This lack of status must have concerned them at first, for the two were quick to "discover" Ancient technology, apparently hoping to gain acclaim. They must have been frustrated when their superiors took credit for the find and they ended up with a season of repetitive drilling.

In their first battle, these new recruits proved to be vital warriors. They defeated a great many foes and captured the opposition's major technological weapons. Their general, it is reported, was not thrilled, but he awarded them medals and promoted them to "6th-class privates." This honor did not appreciably alter their status.

In the next battle, the Imposters again made their superior fighting ability known by overcoming a particularly deadly force, and consequently saved the life of their general, a mutated bear. This time the officers grumbled when the two were given medals and promoted to "5th-class privates." In addition, the general proved none too happy about owing his life to two humans. As a reward, he assigned the two to an elite human brigade which he titled "The Death Squad," and assigned them a special infiltration commando mission.

What actually happened on the mission must be left to speculation. It seems that the target was a hive of hornetroids. For some reason, the reinforcements which the brigade had been promised failed to arrive in time. However, though the entire brigade was lost, the two crystalloids escaped and returned with the hornet queen as their prisoner.

This time, the two were heartily congratulated, given medals and a promotion, and their deeds were acclaimed far and wide. But the praise was short-lived. The next day, it was discovered that the hornet queen had escaped. The two imposters were arrested and accused of betrayal and numerous other treacherous crimes. They were summarily executed, and the Zim have not appeared to bother the Ranks of the Fit since that day.

Stage 4. Leadership

Once the agents planted by the Zim have received acclaim in the alliance they have infiltrated, they then seek to take over leadership of their local group and to replace the rest of the group with crystalloid imposters. In this way, they hope to build their power base, and eventually gain the ear of the chieftain of the society.

Taking Over the Friends of Entropy

The Zim had successfully infiltrated the Friends of Entropy, the Red Death society. One entire gang was replaced with crystalloid duplicates. During the takeover process, their gang of cycle marauders became one of the largest and most feared in the Midwest. Their cycles, no doubt augmented by crystalline technology, roared across the land, pillaging and destroying all in their path.

At the cyclical gathering of the Red Death, the crystal imposters won all the contests and gained a reputation for being the most fearsome and skilled gang of all. The leaders of two powerful rival gangs approached the crystalloid leader with a proposal to join forces for a raid on an unusually powerful southern fortress of the Radioactivists, those lovers of the Earth Poison and its uncontrolled change. He agreed.

For twelve days they rode across burning and wild lands, south into the heart of the Deathlands. On the thirteenth day they reached the fortress. The gang of imposters was given the honored position of leading the attack. Smiling their inhuman smiles, the crystalloid duplicates roared down into the valley of the fortress while the other two gangs circled the ridges. To the imposters' dismay, the Radioactivist novices died without a whimper before their deadly barrage. And then, hidden mortars belched forth gamma death, firing fatal levels of radiation that blistered their skins and shriveled their brains.

It is said that the two rival leaders never turned their gangs down into the valley, nor did they even shed a tear at the loss of these famed heroes. They retreated from the fortress, their wiley little brains already plotting some foul end for each other.

Stage 5. Aide to the Chieftain

Once the Outsiders gain the ear of the grand chieftain of the alliance, they try to become the power behind the throne, manipulating the alliance through council. As advisors, they seek to strengthen their position by supporting the chieftain in all ways and by proving that they are an excellent resource for power.

The Minister of the Purists

The Zim came the closest to gaining control of a Cryptic Alliance when they infiltrated the Knights of Genetic Purity, or so they must have thought. The Prince of the Knights of Genetic Purity in Winpeg became reliant on the forces of one Ren Nedraw, actually a crystalloid imposter. Seeking to consolidate his power, the Prince made Ren his advisor and minister of state. The imposter in turn provided a force armed with some of the most powerful technology available and large supplies of power cells.

In return for this service, Ren the duplicate gained the use of the Purist forces to subjugate the local mutant populace. The mutants were soon set to work operating a vast mineral mining concordium.

However, unrest grew among the slave population and rebel mutants took to raiding the mineral plants. Outraged, the Prince proclaimed his determination to exterminate this mutant menace and turned to his trusted advisor to supply him with caches of weapons, the like of which had never been seen.

Ren the imposter must have been anxious to please his lord, as well as to consolidate his own power. The amount of weaponry that he provided to the Prince must have emptied the coffers of the Zim. But after the weapons were delivered, the Prince sent a signal, and every crystal imposter who had infiltrated the alliance was assassinated.

The Knights boast that they suspected the imposters from the start, but sought to exploit them, hoping to gain an advantage. It is even rumored that the Purists staged the entire mutant revolution to create that advantage. It seems more likely that the Knights somehow stumbled accidentally on the plot and made the most of a bad situation.

Since this last incursion several decades ago, there has been no sight nor sign of the insidious Zim and their plots to conquer our world.

The Outsiders

If you want to include the Outsiders in your GAMMA WORLD® Game campaign, details for the crystalloid constructs are given below. These artificial beings can duplicate almost any shape and general knowledge, but they prove socially inept. Their masters, the Zim, have not yet been discovered, and based on their past performance, would do well to remain in hiding or to retreat entirely from the chaos of this Changed world.

Running the Outsiders

The Zim among the Cryptic Alliances add mystery and spice to any game. They are the non-player characters who are just a little too helpful or a little too strange. They may accompany a group and do a bit too much. They are a bit too careless, but they still survive the everyday dangers faced by natives of the Gamma World. These characters are all too willing to pick up the seemingly useless crystal things, while the other characters take the high tech weapons and equipment found in the ruins.

Here are several sample scenerios in which these creatures might be used to confuse the characters and make them think.

1. The Hunting Trip. A crystalloid hunter just happens to take the PCs near the den of a plant monster whose lair also happens to contain a supply of strange green crystals.

2. The Quick Raid. A crystalloid warrior leads the PCs to raid the camp of another Cryptic Alliance. The enemy camp just happens to have a supply hut with a cache of strange, glowing red crystals.

3. The Challenge. A player character mutant detects the identity of a crystalloid posing as a pure strain human. The crystalloid then demands satisfaction on the field of honor in an effort to silence the character.

4. The New Leader. A powerful new tribesman (actually a crystalloid) is looking for followers and offering huge rewards in the form of Tech V items for joiners, but this leader takes the player characters to unusual and dangerous areas where no mutant has gone before.

The Zim, and other interested alien intruders, can add new mystery and challenge to any GAMMA WORLD® game. Explore the possibilities and let us know what is happening in your campaign.

Typical Crystalloid Construct

Morale: 10
Armor: 3 (−15)
Hit Dice: 25
Hit Points: 200
Land Speed: 30

PS:	16 (+2)	**MS:**	16 (+2)
DX:	19 (+3)	**IN:**	19 (+3)
CN:	22 (+4)	**CH:**	16 (+2)

Mutations: Crystalloids often seem to have mutations, but these are actually bits of crystal technology that simulate the presence of mutational powers. Some examples include:

1. Crystals for electrical generation
2. Specially attuned crystals simulating the specific *hands of power* forms.
3. Crystals providing skeletal enhancement.
4. Crystals with sonic capabilities to produce sonic mutations.
5. Special crystals to reproduce force field and repulsion effects.

Description: Crystalloids are grown in specially treated vats and can be programmed much like androids. They are extremely costly to manufacture and each one requires a large investment of time and effort. When first produced, they look like humanoid sheets of rock. After modification, they can appear as any native creature shorter than five meters. There are special fluid pockets in the outer skin of the modified construct to simulate bleeding. The constructs have solar energy feeding systems and are vulnerable to attack by energy negation.

NEW DRUID SPELLS

Unofficial

by Jon Pickens and Skip Williams

After a hiatus of several months, we turn to the consideration of druid spells. Like all the previous articles in this series, this one suggests spells from which the powers of certain magical items may have been derived. Some of the spells presented also reflect our personal biases about the druid class.

First, in addition to the nature/plant/animal specialty, the druids are oriented towards the basic elements, especially fire and earth. Breaking down the spells by categories might reveal some patterns or gaps in the spell lists for possible development.

Second, many of the druidical spells benefit only the druid casting them, especially the ones giving increased wilderness mobility. Extending some of these to include party-sized groups increases the value of the class to an adventuring party and encourages cooperative play. *Animal speech* is an example of a spell that similarly increases player participation.

Third, with the publication of the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, the question of exactly what druids do on extended underground adventures arises. Since druidical magic can be viewed as "earth" magic, it seems logical to strengthen this aspect of the druidical spell list.

Fourth, we have long felt that high-level spells should not be totally negated by a saving throw, especially since at higher levels the saves become so much easier to make. The *holly dart* spell given here is an example of a tougher highest-level spell designed specifically to replace the *finger of death* spell, which has no druidic flavor at all.

Affect Normal Fires (Alteration)

Level: *1*
Range: *1"/level*
Duration: *2 rounds/level*
Area of Effect: *4' diameter fire*
Components: *V,S*
Casting Time: *3 segments*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell enables the caster to reduce any fire within the area of effect to a minimum of matchlike size and light, or to increase its size and brightness up to the equivalent of a *light* spell. Reducing the fire will cut fuel consumption to half normal, and increasing the fire doubles consumption. Note that heat output is NOT altered in either case.

Burning Hands (Alteration)

Level: *1*
Range: *0*
Duration: *1 round*
Area of Effect: *Special*
Components: *V,S*
Casting Time: *1 segment*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell causes jets of searing flame to shoot forth from the caster's fingertips in a fan-like sheet when the caster's thumbs touch each other and the fingers are spread. The *burning hands* send out flame jets of 3' length in a horizontal arc of about 120° in front of the caster. Any creature in the area of effect takes 1 hit point of damage for each level of experience of the spellcaster. The fire will ignite any flammable materials it touches — such as cloth, paper, parchment, thin wood, etc.

Fortitude (Alteration)

Level: *1*
Range: *Touch*
Duration: *1 turn/level*
Area of Effect: *One creature*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *3 segments*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell enables the druid to bestow resistance to the effects of heat, cold, fatigue and hunger upon any one creature. The recipient is unaffected by normal heat or cold. Magical heat or cold ends the effect immediately, but the spell absorbs up to 10 points of heat or cold damage as it dissipates. Physical fatigue is banished as if the recipient had one hour of sleep per level of the caster, though this does not allow spellcaster characters to bypass the rest required to regain spells. The effects of hunger or starvation are delayed until the spell expires. The material component is mistletoe.

Magic Creeper (Alteration)

Level: *1*
Range: *Touch*
Duration: *2 rounds + 1 round/level*
Area of Effect: *One 20' length*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *1 round*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell allows the druid to temporarily animate up to 20' of a single natural vegetable vine or creeper. The caster can then command the affected vine to knot or unknot itself, move along most normal surfaces (including up walls and along ceilings) at a 2" rate, or attack enemies. The vine can be left attached to its parent growth, or a suitable length can be cut before the spell is cast. To make the vine perform any of these actions, the druid must concentrate for an entire round. Any knots or wrapping will remain in place after the druid stops concentrating.

The vine attacks as the druid, and has an armor class of 5. The round after it wraps around a victim and each round thereafter, as willed by the druid, the vine inflicts 1-4 hit points of constriction damage. Further, the victim must save vs. paralysis or be tangled. The first missed save gives the victim a -2 penalty on attacks and armor class; the second missed save immobilizes the victim completely. A successful *bend bars* attempt will snap the vine outright, and a single blow of an edged weapon inflicting 5 or more hit points of damage will sever it. Otherwise, it can withstand a total of 15 points of damage from edged weapons or damage-producing magic. The spell ends when the duration expires, or when the vine is severed or destroyed. Higher-level druids can animate an additional 20' length per 4 levels of experience. This additional length can be the same vine or several different vines within a 10' radius.

Puffball (Evocation)

Level: *1*
Range: *0*
Duration: *Instantaneous*
Area of Effect: *One creature*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *3 segments*
Saving Throw: *Negates*

Explanation/Description: This spell creates a magical fungus puffball which can be tossed up to 3". It strikes the designated target automatically (no "to hit" roll required) and bursts in a puff of choking and blinding spores. The victim must save vs. spells or be incapacitated for 1-3 rounds (cf. *stinking cloud*). The material component is a small bit of fungus.

Whisper Ward (Alteration)

Level: *1*
Range: *0*
Duration: *Until triggered*
Area of Effect: *Special*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *1 turn*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This ward can be applied to a single item or closure, or it can be used to ward an area up to 60' in diameter. The caster may key it to an individual, alignment, or condition in much the same way as a *magic mouth* spell. If the ward is triggered, a faint whispering breeze will alert the caster. The druid must be within 60 yards of the ward (60 feet underground) to be alerted. The material component is mistletoe.

Animal Speech (Enchantment/Charm)

Level: *2*
Range: *1"/level*
Duration: *1 turn/level*
Area of Effect: *One animal*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *4 segments*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: With this spell, the caster can bestow upon an animal (or giant animal) the ability to speak any specified language from among those known by the caster. The animal can communicate with any creature within normal speaking distance which can understand the bestowed language, though the animal's intelligence remains the same as it was prior to casting. The affected animal is basically well-disposed toward the druid (cf. *speak with animals*). The material component is mistletoe.

Invisibility to Animals, 10' radius (Alteration)

Level: *3*
Range: *Touch*
Duration: *1 turn + 1 round/level*
Area of Effect: *20' diameter sphere*
Components: *S,M*
Casting Time: *5 segments*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell renders all creatures within the area of effect at the time of casting totally undetectable with respect to normal animals (intelligence under 6). This includes giant-sized animals, but it excludes any with magical abilities or powers. The affected creatures are able to walk amongst animals or pass through them as if they did not exist. The spell can also be broken in the same manner as the 2nd-level magic-user spell *invisibility*. The material component of this spell is holly.

Pass Without Trace, 10' radius (Enchantment/Charm)

Level: *3*
Range: *Touch*
Duration: *1 turn/level*
Area of Effect: *20' diameter sphere*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *5 segments*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: When this spell is cast, the recipient and any other creatures within the area of effect can move through any type of terrain — mud, snow, dust, etc. — and leave neither footprint or scent. Thus, tracking a creature covered by this dweomer is impossible. The material components of this spell are a leaf of mistletoe and a sprig of pine or evergreen. The area which is passed over will radiate a faint dweomer for 6-36 turns after affected creatures pass.

Shape Wood (Alteration)

Level: *3*
Range: *Touch*
Duration: *Permanent*
Area of Effect: *3 cubic feet + 1 cubic foot/level*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *5 segments*
Saving Throw: *Special*

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell, the druid can form an existing piece of wood into any desired shape. For example, the caster could make a wooden weapon, fashion a special trapdoor, or even carve a figurine. By the same token, the spell would allow the spellcaster to reshape a wooden door, perhaps, so as to escape imprisonment, providing that the volume of wood involved was within the limits of the area of effect. However, while wooden containers and other items can be thus formed, the fineness of detail is not great. Wood-based creatures and wooden magical items are immune to the effects of this spell. The material component of the spell is a bit of flexible tree bark.

Thunderclap (Evocation)
cf. staff of thunder & lightning

Level: *3*
Range: *½"/level*
Duration: *Instantaneous*
Area of Effect: *½" × 4" × 2" cone*
Components: *V,S*
Casting Time: *5 segments*
Saving Throw: *Special*

Explanation/Description: When the caster completes the incantation and claps his hands, a cone of deafening noise is created. Creatures within the area of effect are deafened. Further, they must save vs. spells or be stunned (i.e., reeling and unable to attack) for 1-2 rounds as well. Deafened creatures receive an additional saving throw vs. spells each round, with success indicating that their hearing has returned. The spell causes no damage.

Meld into Stone (Alteration)

Level: *4*
Range: *Touch*
Duration: *1 turn + 1-10 rounds*
Area of Effect: *Special*
Components: *V,S*
Casting Time: *6 segments*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell enables the caster to meld into a large stone, along with up to 100 pounds of non-living gear worn or carried. Magical artifacts and relics are not affected by the spell. To effect the spell, the caster must stand next to the desired stone (which must be large enough to accomodate the druid's body in all three dimensions) while holding a small sample of the same type of stone. If the dimensions of the stone are insufficient to accomodate the caster, or if the druid is wearing and carrying more than 100 pounds of gear, the spell will fail and be wasted. The magic lasts for 9-16 (1d8 + 8) rounds, and the variable part of the duration is rolled secretly by the DM.

At any time before the duration expires, the caster can step out of the stone along the same surface that was used to enter it. That is, the spell does not allow movement through the stone such as would a *passwall* or *phase door* spell. If the caster has not left the stone before the duration expires, then he or she will be expelled from the stone and suffer 4-32 (4d8) points of damage — and each piece of gear affected must save vs. petrification or turn to stone. While in the stone, the caster is aware of the passage of time, but cannot see or hear anything that may be going on around the stone.

While inside the stone, the druid may be harmed by certain spells cast upon it. For example, *stone to flesh* will expel the druid and inflict 4-32 points of damage, but items carried need not save. *Stone shape* will cause 4-16 (4d4) points of damage, but will not expel the druid. When *transmute rock to mud* is cast upon an occupied stone, the druid will be expelled, and must save vs. spells or be slain instantly.

Animate Tree (Enchantment)

Level: *5*
Range: *½"/level*
Duration: *1 round/level*
Area of Effect: *One tree*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *1 round*
Saving Throw: *Special*

Explanation/Description: This spell enables the druid to animate a tree. The *animated tree* will have the same hit dice and general characteristics as a treant of the same size (*Monster Manual*, page 96). A tree whose resulting hit dice would exceed the caster's druidical level may not be animated, and the selection is further limited by the actual size of the trees available. Intelligent or aligned trees may save vs. spells to avoid the effect, and the spell has no effect on actual treants and similar extraordinary creatures. The animated tree will follow simple commands. At the end of the spell's duration, the tree will return to its original location and reroot itself. The material component is mistletoe.

Calm Water (Alteration)

Level: *5*
Range: *0*
Duration: *1 turn/level*
Area of Effect: *120' diameter sphere*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *8 segments*
Saving Throw: *Special*

Explanation/Description: This incantation inhibits natural or magical disturbances in water within its area of effect. Aquatic or water-based creatures with fewer hit dice than the caster's level will flee the area if possible, and water-based creatures (water weirds, elementals, etc.) of this type cannot form. Aquatic and water-based creatures whose hit dice equal or exceed the caster's level must save vs. spells to form, then save each round to operate in the affected area. The effect moves with the caster. (Note that while this spell would calm the waters of a hurricane, it would not affect the gale-force winds.) The material component is mistletoe.

Flesh to Stone (Alteration) Reversible

Level: *6*
Range: *1"/level*
Duration: *Permanent*
Area of Effect: *Special*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *8 segments*
Saving Throw: *Negates*

Explanation/Description: This spell enables the caster to convert any sort of stone into flesh. If the recipient stone object was formerly living, the spell will restore life (and goods), although the survival of the creature is subject to the usual system shock survival dice roll. Any formerly living creature, regardless of size, can thus be returned to flesh. Ordinary stone can be likewise turned to flesh at a volume of 9 cubic feet per level of experience of the caster.

The reverse turns flesh of any sort to stone under the same restrictions as the *stone to flesh* spell functions. All possessions on the person of the affected creature likewise turn to stone. This reverse of the spell allows the victim a saving throw vs. spells. The material components of the spell are a pinch of earth and a drop of blood; lime, water and earth are used for the reverse.

Stone Tell (Divination)

Level: *6*
Range: *Touch*
Duration: *1 turn*
Area of Effect: *1 cubic yard*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *1 turn*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: When a druid casts a *stone tell* upon an area, the very stones can speak and relate to the caster who or what has touched them, and what is covered, concealed, or simply behind the place where they stand. The stones will relate complete descriptions as required. The material components for this spell are a drop of mercury and a bit of clay.

Holly Dart (Alteration/Evocation)

Level: *7*
Range: *6"*
Duration: *Instantaneous*
Area of Effect: *One creature*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *8 segments*
Saving Throw: *Special*

Explanation/Description: This spell transforms a sprig of holly into a deadly missile, which must be hurled immediately at a living target. A target not warded by a protective magical item (ring, bracers, armor, etc.) is automatically struck; otherwise the caster must make a "to hit" roll at a +6 bonus. The creature struck must save vs. death at a -6 penalty or be killed instantly. If the saving throw is successful, the victim takes 3-17 (2d8 +1) points of damage instead. The material component is a sprig of holly.

Sustarre's Transformation (Alteration)

Level: *7*
Range: *½"/level*
Duration: *Special*
Area of Effect: *1-4 creatures in a 6" cube*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *1 round*
Saving Throw: *Special*

Explanation/Description: This potent transformation will *polymorph* one or more living creatures (as per the *polymorph other* spell), causing them to take root and turn into trees unless a save vs. polymorph is successful. Up to twice the caster's level in hit dice can be affected, and the caster must select which creatures will be affected. Creatures who successfully save are *slowed* for 1-4 rounds. A single target saves at -4, two save at -2, and three or four save at -1. The effect cannot be *dispelled*, but a *remove curse* from a caster of higher level than the druid will release a trapped creature. The caster can release any such trapped creature at will. The material component is mistletoe.

DISPEL CONFUSION

STAR FRONTIERS®

SCIENCE FICTION ROLE-PLAYING GAME

SFQ: Why can't Level 1 Pilots fly starships within a system? According to the Pilot Certification Table (KH page 24), a Level 1 Pilot can fly system ships of all sizes. Is there a difference between flying a system ship and flying a starship within a system?
SFA: Yes. Starships are radically different in design, propulsion, and equipment from system ships. They do not suddenly shed all their complex machinery when they enter a star system. Whether the starship is going on an intergalactic voyage or just a spin around the solar system, it still takes an experienced pilot to get it out of the docking bay.
SFQ: Does an Engineer's Toolbox (KH page 30) come with a Techkit?
SFA: Yes, the basic Techkit is included in addition to the other specialized equipment.
SFQ: With a sick bay, a medic gains +20% on all Success Rates (AD, page 90). How much does a spaceship sick bay cost?
SFA: For basic medical facilities capable of treating most wounds, infections, common diseases and poisons, the sick bay will require 6 square meters of space and 8,000 Credits per patient to be accomodated. This includes bed, monitoring devices, and 10 times the amount of each drug found in a standard medkit, plus computer facilities able to accomodate a level 3 medical treatment job maxiprog. A basic sick bay allows the medic to gain the bonus for treating wounds and infections, but not for other specialized medical skills.

More elaborate facilities may include a separate laboratory for analyzing new disease organisms and developing new drugs and anti-toxins. A laboratory costs 100,000 Credits and includes equipment and maxiprogs for analysis, diagnosis, and testing. A sick bay with a laboratory allows the medic to gain the bonus for diagnosis and for treatment of disease, poison, and radiation.

Larger starships and space stations are normally equipped with a surgical unit as well. Surgical facilities cost an additional 100,000 credits and include surgical equipment, plus specialized level 6 life support and medical treatment maxiprogs. The surgical unit will allow the medic to gain the stated bonus for surgery and forensic medicine.
SFQ: How is the pay/day determined for a character with two skills that pay an equal amount? For example, according to the pay/day table (AD, page 60) a Level 3 Roboticist/Level 2 Medic could be paid 100 Cr (80 + 20) or 110 Cr (30 + 80), depending upon which skill was considered full rate.
SFA: If the character is hired for a job where one of the skills is critical, that skill should be paid at full rate. Otherwise, the higher level skill is paid at full rate, and the lower level one at an additional +10/level/day, as given. Therefore, your example character would receive (80 + 20) = 100 Credits/day.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

ROLE-PLAYING GAME

ADQ: When a thief successfully sneaks up to a victim and backstabs, should there not also be a surprise roll? As the thief truly did surprise the opponent, and other character classes in this situation would have the chance to attack in each surprise segment gained, why not the thief? Or is maximum surprise assumed — modified by dexterity?
ADA: The degree of surprise is not assumed. At the first confrontation, the thief gains the backstab bonuses (+4 "to hit" and multiplied damage) only if a standard roll indicates surprise. If the victim is not surprised, only the +2 bonus "to hit" from behind applies to the backstab attempt, and multiple damage is disallowed, since it is contingent on surprise. Assuming surprise, multiple attacks may be possible (as per normal surprise rules); if so, the +4 "to hit" bonus applies for all such attacks, but only the first gains the multiplier, as the victim who has been hit once does not remain surprised per se. Another backstab attempt against the same victim may be made by a different thief, or by the same thief if he or she disengages, departs, and successfully gains surprise upon returning. Surprise is not possible if the victim is aware of the thief's presence and position.
ADQ: If a half-orc with a dexterity of 12-14 is limited to 8th-level as a thief, why can that same character advance up to 15th-level in the assassin class and thereby gain the same abilities as a 13th-level thief? It seems that no evil half-orc should bother being a thief, since he can get more complete thief training as an assassin, plus the assassin abilities as well.
ADA: That assessment is correct; a smart evil half-orc will nearly always choose the assassin path over straight thievery. The orcish race is vicious by nature, and that tendency is reflected in the career paths available to half-orcs.

But life's a lot tougher for an assassin than for a thief. The latter class is respected and tolerated (or even encouraged) by adventurers, and possibly even rulers; the former, however, is usually despised by all.
ADQ: Why do magic-users seem to be more attuned to the elements (at a medium level) than druids? Magic-users as low as 9th-level can conjure any of the four "most common" elementals, assuming that they have the spell, whereas druids must wait until they reach 11th-level to *conjure fire elementals*, and 12th-level to *conjure earth elementals*. Even though the druid may control the summoned elemental with basically no chance of failure, it seems that the druid should have more power over elemental-summoning than the magic-user. The magic-user is, in my opinion, one of the strongest of the player character classes, and mages do not need any druidical powers.
ADA: Druids are attuned to nature, which is the perfect blending of all four elements. It is against their basic nature to bring one element into dominance over the others; that creates imbalance. Magic-users, on the other hand, may be adept at conjuring. Those who are make careful studies of other planes, including elemental planes, whereas druids study only the Prime Material Plane.

Note also that druids gain the cooperation of elementals, but magic-users must coerce the poor creatures, and thus run the ever-present risk of losing control and being attacked by their conjurations.
ADQ: The description of the 9th-level magic-user spell *prismatic sphere* in the *Players Handbook* specifies that the seventh sphere confers force field protection. Is this protection akin to a *wall of force*? If so, the seventh sphere is equal to all six former spheres put together, and the magic-user could not cast spells out of it. This makes the *prismatic sphere* spell an expensive delay only for the magic-user, and leaves the mage's comrades out in the cold.
ADA: No, the force field is NOT a *wall of force*. It is exactly as the spell description states — a barrier which sends anyone trying to penetrate it to another plane unless a save vs. spells is made. If the save is successful, the attacker may pass through it to the mage. Note, however, that said attacker is once again subject to all the effects on his way out, and must make a new save vs. that effect and each of the others for which one is required to escape.

There is nothing in the spell description to indicate that the creator of the *sphere* cannot cast spells out of it. Indeed, the caster may pass through the sphere with no ill effects, and his or her spells can as well.

The Critical Hit

Beware the Klingons![1]

by Errol Farstad

". . . And though I had slain A thousand foes less one,
The Thousandth knife found my liver; The Thousandth said to me,
"Now you shall die, now none shall know."
And the fool, looking down, believed this,
Not seeing, above his shoulder, the naked stars,
Each one remembering."[2]

The above is the statement of an ancient Klingon belief — that the naked stars remember all acts of courage (and cowardice) performed under them. Now you, too, can play the favorite bad guys of the STAR TREK TV show and movies — the Klingons!

FASA Corporation has published "The Klingons," a a supplement to FASA's STAR TREK®: The Role Playing Game. But before getting into my review of the supplement, I'd like to inform you that the second edition of STAR TREK: The Role Playing Game (STRPG) is now available in two different editions. The basic game ($12.00) includes the Star Fleet[1] Officer's Manual, Cadet Source Book, Game Operations Manual and 2 dice. The deluxe set ($25.00) contains all of the above plus Starship Combat rules, a hex grid for starship combat, counters, deck plans for the U.S.S. Enterprise[1] AND a Klingon D-7 Battlecruiser[1], plus three adventures to give you a feel for the STRPG. From what I've seen, the second edition is far superior to the first. It even has a quick reference chart for character generation.

By the way, if there's anything in particular you wish to have reviewed, send your request to me care of RPGA™ Network HQ and I'll certainly do my best to get to it as soon as possible!

General Information

"The Klingons" character supplement, produced by FASA Corporation ($15.00), tells you everything you ever wanted to know (and some things you didn't want to know) about these ruthless, despicable, nasty people — and those are the compliments! Having played this game as a player, I can testify that it takes a certan amount of nasty ruthlessness to properly play a Klingon. But players should be warned not to get too attached to their characters, for the latter may die rather suddenly during a political shake-up. (Mine did.) But fear not! As long as the naked stars watch, you'll get your revenge. (I will.)

Packaging

On the front of the box is a picture of an Imperial Klingon[1] commander from the first STAR TREK movie, sneering menacingly. The artwork is quite detailed, from the top of his battle-crested head to his manicured fingernails. It does spark enough interest in this supplement to induce purchase, though one may wonder what one is getting into.

Within the box is a sourcebook, whose cover depicts the same scene as the front of the box. The set gives complete information on the Klingons, plus 56 colorful, sturdy counters with good detail representing Klingons and their ships. Ship status sheets are included for keeping track of the latter, and the set also includes two ready-to-play adventures to give players and GM alike a taste of role-playing Klingons.

Rules & Explanations

The rules are as easily read and understood as those of STRPG, and characters are generated in much the same fashion with two 10-sided dice. The same basic statistics are there, but racial adjustments apply if you run an Imperial Klingon (from the opening sequence of STAR TREK: The Motion Picture and STAR TREK III), a Human Fusion[1] (most popularly seen on the TV series) or a Romulan Fusion[1] (a Romulan-Imperial genetic cross).

As with STRPG, the skills available to help round out your character's specialty field range from Administration to Zoology.

Miscellaneous

Amazingly, I have no real complaints about "The Klingons" character supplement. The artwork within the book is quite good and is used generously, leaving no room for doubt as to the shapes of the various artifacts found within the Klingon universe. That is to say, the differences between Mark I, Mark II, and Mark III sonic disruptors[1] are perfectly clear.

What makes the supplement so interesting is that the Klingon universe is explained quite thoroughly; this includes cultural background, politics, and little bits of information on the history of the race that round out the Klingons in general. The book is well-organized, and has an excellent index. Major sections appear in bold type, with subsections in lighter type.

Overall

"The Klingons" is an excellent addition to STRPG. The only problem is that if one wishes to run the supplement, one must first purchase the initial set-up. (This is, of course, not unlike the AD&D® Game system.) Considering the price, I feel that it would be money well-spent.

Suggested Supplementary Reading: *"The Final Reflection"* by John M. Ford. This work gives a very good background as to why Klingons act the way they do.

Final Ratings

"The Klingons" Character Supplement

Packaging	★★★
Rules	★★★★
Miscellaneous	★★★
Overall	★★★
Degree of Difficulty	2 (It is best if players have some experience before trying to role-play a Klingon)

1. Game terms and details are from the STAR TREK TV-series, movies, publications, *et. al.*, and are protected by U.S. trademark and copyright laws.
2. From "The Klingons" Character Supplement, © FASA Corporation.
3. STAR TREK is a registered trademark owned by Paramount Pictures Corporation.

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Member Art Feature

Woodland Romance
by Pat Tapp

Convention Announcements

Canada

Ontario

PANDEMONIUM IV

Our fourth annual gaming convention will be held in Toronto, Ontario on January 17, 1987. This year the convention will feature an RPGA™ Network AD&D® Game tournament along with the usual selection of gaming events.

For information, contact: Doug Richards, 404 Huron Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2G6. Phone: (416) 598-1693.

Manitoba

PRAIRIE CON

Come to Prairie Con 1987 for an action-packed gaming weekend! This year we hope to feature an RPGA™ Network AD&D® Game tournament in addition to our other gaming events.

For information, contact: Brian J. Robbins, 1374 9th Street, Brandon, Manitoba, Canada R7A 4C5.

United States

California

UNIVERSE

New Century Project presents its Los Angeles convention on January 2-4, 1987. An RPGA™ Network AD&D® Game tournament will be featured, along with dozens of other activities.

For more information, contact: Dave Manuel, P.O. Box 758, Bellflower, CA 90706. Phone: (213) 920-8705.

ORC CON 1987

Come to the Los Angeles Airport Hilton on February 13, 14, 15 & 16, 1987 for DTI's annual gaming convention. For the first time, ORC CON will feature an RPGA™ Network AD&D® Game tournament in addition to our usual vast selection of gaming events.

For information, contact: DTI, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach, CA 90808. Phone: (213) 420-3675.

GAMEX 1987

The Pasadena Hilton Hotel will be the site for GAMEX 1987 on May 22, 23, 24 & 25, 1987. The convention will feature all types of gaming events, including an RPGA™ Network AD&D® Game tournament.

For information, contact: DTI, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach, CA 90808. Phone: (213) 420-3675.

Indiana

LAF-CON II

This year's convention will be held on April 25, 1987 at the Family Inn in West Lafayette, Indiana. Once again an RPGA™ Network AD&D® Game tournament will be featured — you need not be a member to enter. Several other fantasy role-playing, boardgame, and miniature events will also be available. Penny Petticord will be our special guest.

For information, contact: LAF-CON II, c/o L.A.G., Box 51, Lafayette, IN 47902. Phone: (317) 523-2551.

BATCON VII

Come to Sherman House in Batesville, Indiana on June 19, 20 & 21, 1987 for our seventh gaming convention! Featured events will include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® Game tournament and all types of gaming.

For information, contact: Rob Washburn, 1025 Locust Avenue, Batesville, IN 47006.

GLATHRICON '87

Come to the Signature Inn in Evansville, Indiana on June 26, 27 & 28, 1987 for the gaming event of the year! As usual, the convention will feature several RPGA™ Network tournaments, including the first tougher-than-Masters event! The feature tournament will be a charity benefit event for the American Cancer Society in memory of member Joe Martin. Special guests will be Gary Gygax, Frank Mentzer, and Penny Petticord.

For information, contact: Jean Rabe, 716 South Burkhardt Road, Evansville, IN 47714.

Kansas

IMAGICON VI

Come to Manhattan, Kansas at the end of February (see next issue for exact date) for our annual gaming extravaganza. Once again, the convention will feature an RPGA™ Network AD&D® Game tournament along with our usual array of gaming events.

For information, contact: Richard Walker, 601 Yuma, Apt. 3, Manhattan, KS 66502-6243.

Missouri

SHOW-ME CON II

The second annual SHOW-ME CON will take place at Whiteman Air Force Base in on January 31 & February 1, 1987. The convention will be open to the public for the first time this year, and it will feature two RPGA™ Network tournaments — one for the AD&D® Game and the other for the D&D® Game.

For information, contact: Brian Leikam, 938 Summit Circle, Whiteman AFB, MO 65305. Phone: (816) 563-2682.

Montana

MISCON II

Come to the Quality Inn in Missoula on May 15, 16 & 17, 1987 for our second annual science-fiction and gaming extravaganza! Once again the convention will feature an RPGA™ Network AD&D® Game tournament along with our other gaming events. Special guests will be Marion Zimmer Bradley, Mike and Beth Finkbiner, Bob Eggleton, and Steve Jackson.

For information, contact: MISCON II, c/o WMSFF, P.O. Box 9363, Missoula, MT 59807.

New Jersey

LUNACON '87

Come to the Westchester Marriott on March 20, 21 & 22, 1987 for this premiere science-fiction convention. This year marks the convention's 30th anniversary, and an RPGA™ Network AD&D® Game tournament will be featured for the first time. Special guests include Jack Williamson, Darrell K. Sweet, Jack L. Chalker, and Mike Resnick.

For convention information, contact: LUNACON '87, P.O. Box 338, New York, NY 10150-0338.

For judging information, contact: David E. Stern, 11-18 Vermeer Drive, South Amboy, NJ 08879.

Ohio

NEOCON 1987

This year's NEOCON will be held at Kent State University on June 5, 6 & 7, 1987. Once again, we will feature an RPGA™ Network AD&D® Game tournament. Special guests will be Penny Petticord and Frank Mentzer. An excellent assortment of role-playing, miniatures, and boardgame events will also be available.

For information, contact: Chuck Baltes, 1530 Moreview Drive, Copley, OH 44321.

Texas

WARCON '87

The oldest gaming convention in Texas will be held February 6, 7 & 8, 1987 at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. Featured events will be an AD&D® Game open tournament and a TOP SECRET® Game open tournament, both individual advancement and sponsored by the RPGA™ Network. Also included in the event list are a variety of boardgames, miniatures, and other role-playing tournaments, along with a dealers' room and 24-hour open gaming.

For information on attending, contact: MSC NOVA, P.O. Box J-1, College Station, TX 77844.

For judging information, contact: Jim Bennett, 4200D Boyett, Bryan, TX 77801.

Washington

RUSTYCON 4

On the weekend of January 16, 17 & 18, 1987, the Everett Pacific Hotel will be host to RUSTYCON 4, a science-fiction/fantasy convention. This year the convention may feature an RPGA™ Network AD&D® Game tournament along with its regular gaming program. Every year we premiere at least one new game system and allow our attendees to try out original modules for a variety of role-playing game systems. Special guests will be C. J. Cherryh, Dameon Willich, and Frank Catalano.

For information, contact: RUSTYCON 4, P.O. Box 47132, Seattle, WA 98146.

Wisconsin

WINTER FANTASY™ '87 Convention

Come to the Americana Resort in Lake Geneva on January 3 & 4, 1987 for a weekend of gaming pleasure! This year's convention will feature several RPGA Network tournaments (including a Masters AD&D® Game event), plus miniature events, boardgames, and a Saturday night auction. Special guests include Jim Ward, Frank Mentzer, Penny Petticord, Tom Wham, and Harold Johnson.

Admission is $5.00 per day or $8.00 for the full weekend. Those who pre-register for the convention before December 15, 1986 are guaranteed a space in the Saturday morning RPGA Network AD&D® Game tournament (9:00 session). Send check or money order (no cash please) made payable to WINTER FANTASY™ Convention to the address below.

Special convention hotel rates and a private game session with the designers on Friday night are available for all those who register at the Americana for both Friday and Saturday nights. Reservations should be made by December 15, 1986 to take advantage of the special offers. Call the Americana at (414) 248-8811 and mention WINTER FANTASY when you make your reservations.

For information, send a SASE to: WINTER FANTASY, Route 5, Box 18, Apt. 1, Lake Geneva, WI 53147

For judging information, contact RPGA Network HQ, P.O. Box 509, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Phone: (414) 248-3625.

Classifieds

Looking for other gamers in your area? Starting a new club? Put it in the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine classifieds! There is no charge for this service, but the submitter of the ad must be a member of the RPGA™ Network. Each ad should be 25 words or less. No commercial advertising accepted.

United States Regional

Alabama: Our new club "Dungeon Masters" is looking for members. We specialize in the D&D® Game. If you are interested in joining, please contact: Jason Andrews, P.O. Box 251, Midland City, AL 36350 or call Donald Leger at (205) 983-1340.

California: I'd like to find someone in the San Bernardino area who likes to play the D&D® and TOP SECRET® Games. If you are interested in putting together a game, please contact: Gene Mikkelson, 2056 Nolan 5-D, San Bernardino, CA 92405.

California: I would like to form or join a role-playing group. My interests include the AD&D®, STAR FRONTIERS®, BattleTech™, AeroTech™, TRAVELLER®, STAR FLEET BATTLES, CAR WARS™, JAMES BOND 007, and RINGWORLD Games. Contact: Kelly Alexander, 48871 Gamay Drive, Fremont, CA 94539. Phone: (415) 656-7178.

Florida: I would like to meet some gamers (ages 18 and over) who play or judge the AD&D®, TOP SECRET®, and STAR FRONTIERS® Games. I am new to the RPGA™ Network, with three years of outside playing experience. Contact: Michael McCormick, 2166 Sunnyside Lane, Sarasota, FL 33579. Phone: (813) 955-9730.

Georgia: Join the "Dragon Alliance of Gamers and Role-Players" (DAGR), Atlanta's only registered RPGA™ Network Guild. Our group sponsors RPGA Network tournaments at seven southern conventions and presents its own yearly gaming convention, DRAGON CON. Call (404) 296-7148 (voice), or The Dragon BBS at (404) 294-4510 (300/1200 Baud, 24 Hours) for additonal information.

Massachusetts: Lonely player seeks others in the Fall River area to form a co-ed gaming group. Ages 10-18 preferred. I have played the D&D® Game, and I would be willing to learn others — any RPG will do. Please contact: Mike Costa, P.O. Box 634, Assonet, MA 02702. Phone: (617) 644-2195 (10:00 A.M. - 8:30 P.M.)

Michigan: Our small AD&D® Game club is looking for serious and experienced players (ages 16 and up) in the Metro-Detroit area. Contact: Charles Moss, 20875 Winchester, Southfield, MI 48076.

Michigan: Experienced gamer and DM looking for a gaming club or players in the northwestern Wayne County area. I play the AD&D®, STAR FRONTIERS®, and GAMMA WORLD® Games. Contact: Eric Larson, 16335 Riverside, Livonia, MI 48154.

Missouri: Experienced AD&D® Game player and DM seeks other gamers in the Kansas City area. I am also very interested in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ and TOP SECRET® Games. Contact: James A. Johnson, 6436 East 16th, Kansas City, MO 64126.

Montana: I am looking for anyone in the southeast part of Montana who would like to play the D&D®, JAMES BOND 007™, or TRAVELLER® Games. I am also willing to try other RPGs. Ages 12-16 preferred. Contact: Darren C. Edwards, Box 324, Broadus, MT 59317.

New Jersey: Brave (or not so brave) adventurers wanted to rid the world of various evil and not-so-nice things. We meet at a local library. If you are 14 years of age or older, experienced with role-playing games, and would be interested in joining our gamers' club, call Andy at (201) 494-8278. Please, no half-ogres!

New York: Attention western New York gamers! The "Frewsburg Gamers' Association" (an official RPGA™ Network club) is in need of members. We play all games made by TSR, Inc. and many others. (Be prepared for one of the most exciting AD&D® Game campaigns ever!) Contact: Shawn Lucas, P. O. Box 582, Frewsburg, NY 14738. Phone: (716) 569-4172.

New York: Demented DM looking for players to try his style. I play most role-playing games. Warning — we play with some slightly hack and slay type players! I have 10 years of experience. Any female players at all are welcome. Contact: John C. S. Galvin, 510 West 218th Street, New York, NY 10034. Phone: (212) 942-5933.

New York: Mature 14-year-old looking for gamers who play the D&D®, AD&D®, VILLIANS & VIGILANTES and/or STAR FRONTIERS® Games in and around the Buffalo area. I am also interested in the BattleTech™ and MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Games. Ages 13-16 preferred. Contact: Scott Bylewski, 56 Denise Drive, Cheektowaga, NY 14227. Phone: (716) 668-8229.

North Carolina: Experienced player interested in starting or joining a group that plays the AD&D® and TOP SECRET® Games. Ages 18 and up. "Hack & Slashers" and "Monty Haulers" need not apply. Contact: Paul Billings, 2145-F Fiddlers Court, Winston-Salem, NC 27107. Phone: (919) 785-3360 (after 6:00 P.M.)

Ohio: Our new ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game club on the east side of Cleveland needs players and DMs. Contact: Ken Evans, 1041 Pembrook, Cleveland Heights, OH 44121. Phone: 382-2776 (after 4:00 P.M.)

Ohio: Established communication network of gamers across the state wants new contacts. For details, send SASE to: Bob Kindel, Box 24, Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44222.

Oklahoma: I will be attending college this fall at Central State University in Edmond, Oklahoma. I am interested in starting an RPGA™ Network club, or just in getting a group together to play the AD&D® Game. If you are interested, please contact: Charles Beasley, 304 Bernie Housing, Bernie, MO 63822. Phone: (314) 293-4620.

Puerto Rico: I would like to form a gaming club in the San Juan area. My gaming interests include the D&D® Game (all levels), the AD&D®, TOP SECRET®, GAMMA WORLD®, GANGBUSTERS™, INDIANA JONES™, and CAR WARS™ Games. Other games are also welcome. Please contact: Cesar Diaz, 190 Hostos B543, Hato Rey, PR 00918. Phone: (809) 751-7324.

Tennessee: I, Erik, head master of the "Guild of the Demented Gnome," need players in the mid-south area for the AD&D®, STAR FRONTIERS®, CAR WARS™, TOP SECRET®, and VILLAINS & VIGILANTIES Games. Are there any female gamers out there? Contact: Erik Sledd, 104 Shady Oak Court, Fairveiw, TN 37062. Phone: (615) 799-2043.

Texas: Experienced player of the AD&D® Game would like to find other gamers with the same interest to form a group in the Houston area. I'm bored to tears, so please contact: Kevin Griswold, 2614 Hollis, Houston, TX 77093. Phone: (713) 694-2645 (weekends only).

Virginia: We are starting an RPGA™ Network club in the Henrico County area, and we need players and DMs (ages 12 and up). We specialize in the AD&D® and STAR FRONTIERS® Games. Contact: Randy Largen, 5417 Raleigh Road, Richmond, VA 23231. Phone: (804) 226-2280.

Virginia: I have recently relocated, and I am desperately seeking a new gaming group. I have 6 years role-playing experience in the AD&D®, GAMMA WORLD®, TRAVELLER®, and TWILIGHT 2000® Games, and everything in between. I am also willing to learn new games. Contact: David Oxender, 16B South Kingsbridge, Chesapeake, VA 23320.

Washington: Lonely gamer looking for something to do. I am interested in the D&D® Game, and would like to join a gamers' club in the Douglas County area. Contact: Joe Schmutzler, 2525 North Astor Court, East Wenatchee, WA 98801. Phone: (509) 884-7718.

Wisconsin: 14-year-old gamer experienced in the D&D® Game, and willing to become experienced in the AD&D® Game, is looking for a gaming group in the Racine area. I also play the STAR FRONTIERS® Game. Contact: Tim Wolf, 2910 Thornapple Court, Racine, WI 53402.

Special

Pen Pal Wanted: I would like to strike up a correspondence with one or more other gamers who share my interests. I play the AD&D®, STAR FRONTIERS®, CAR WARS™, TOP SECRET®, and VILLAINS & VIGILANTES Games. Contact: Erik Sledd, 104 Shady Oak Court, Fairveiw, TN 37062. Phone: (615) 799-2043.

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